Tuesday 17 June 2025

Amateur Photographer

Nikon Z5II

An impressive spec for the price, and the best-value full-frame camera you can buy

Passionate about photography since 1884

Easy large-format

Enjoy large-format film cameras without the hassle or expense of sheet film, by using roll-film backs, says **David Clapp**

Tariq Zaidi

Photographing traditional Nuba wrestlers in Sudan

Atlantic record

Documenting 75 years of the influential record label

FIRST LOOK

Fujifilm X-E5

Interchangeable-lens version of the **X100VI**? Yes, please!

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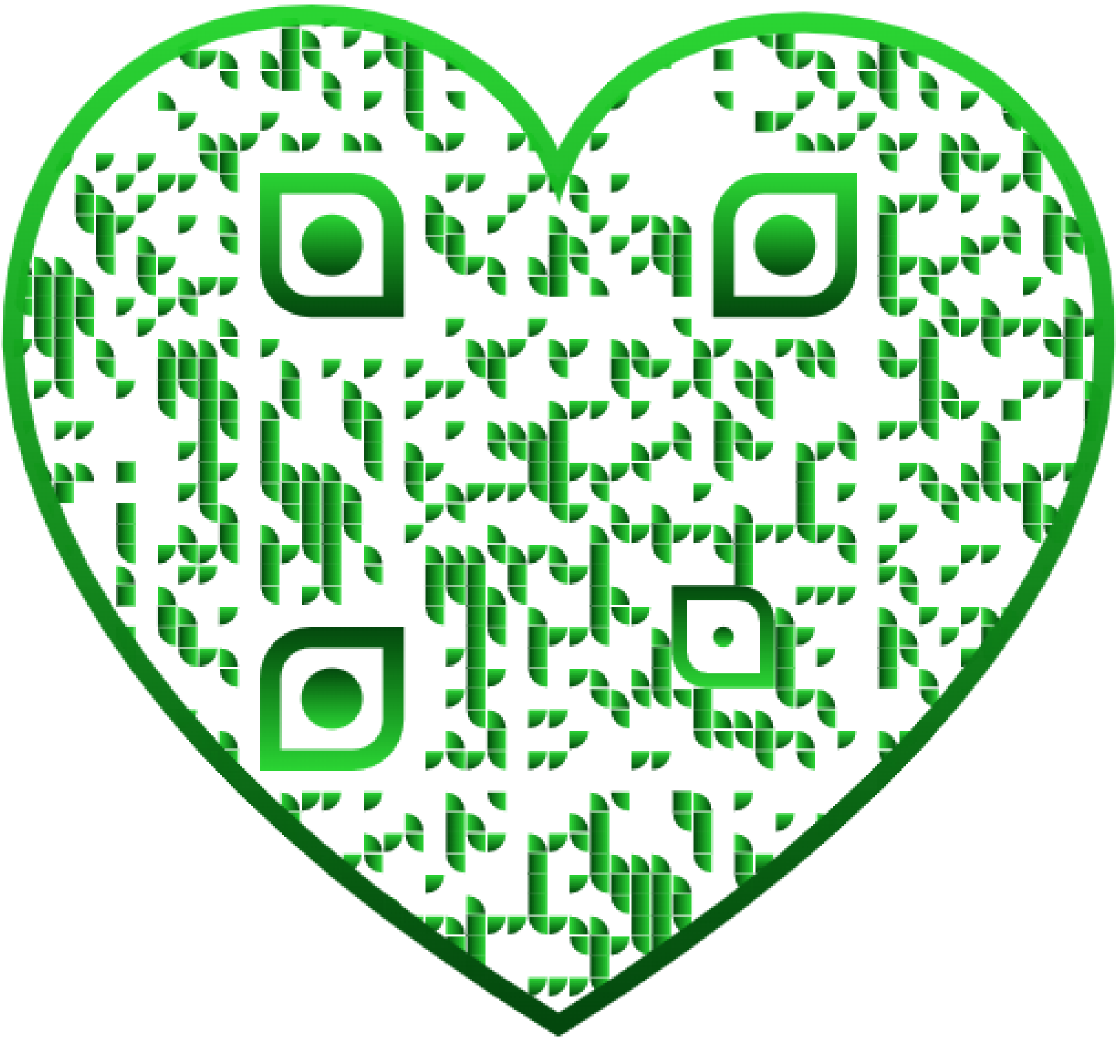

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Welcome

We keep saying it, but photographers have never had it so good when it comes to cameras, and this week we feature two new models that prove the point. Nikon's Z5II offers an unprecedented feature set for the price, putting the cat among the pigeons in the affordable full-frame sector. And if you've been yearning for an interchangeable-lens version of the Fujifilm X100VI (already one of the world's most desirable cameras) your prayers have now been answered. Don't miss our first look at the X-E5 on page 4. As a counterpoint David Clapp goes old school with roll-film backs on a large-format camera, and we've also got two great documentary features this week. If you enjoy documentary photography don't miss our next live event. See page 40 for details and early bird tickets.

Nigel Atherton, Editor

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MAIN COVER PICTURE © DAVID CLAPP. INSET PICTURE, ABOVE: © TARIQ ZAIDI
INSET PICTURE, BELOW: © ATLANTIC RECORDS ARCHIVES

This week's cover image is by David Clapp. Read his feature on page 12

THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

ANDY WESTLAKE
Technical Editor

Andy Westlake takes a first look at Fujifilm's X-E5: the interchangeable-lens X100VI

DAVID CLAPP

Using 120 film backs, the top pro explores cost-effective large format, with tips for large-format kit

PETER DENCH
Acting Features Ed

Peter Dench talks to Tariq Zaidi about his project on the ancient tradition of Nuba wrestling

AMY DAVIES
Features Editor

Amy tests Nikon's Z5II; and in Books & exhibitions, highlights *75 Years of Atlantic Records*

DAMIEN DEMOLDER

AP's former editor tests the Neewer F700, a keenly priced, impressive 7in field monitor

JESSICA MILLER
Dep Online Editor

The manager of our social media channels picks out great reader shots on page 42

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Fujifilm X-E5

Fujifilm's latest rangefinder-style mirrorless model aims to be an interchangeable-lens version of the popular X100VI. **Andy Westlake** takes a first look

FUJINON ASPHERICAL LENS
SUPER EBC XF 23mm 1:2.8 R WR ø39
16 11 8 5.6 4

At a glance

£1299 body only
£1549 with 23mm F2.8 kit lens

- 40.2MP APS-C X-Trans sensor
- Up to 13fps shooting
- 6.2K 30p, 4K 60p, and Full HD 240p video
- 2.36m-dot, 0.62x viewfinder
- 3in, 1.04m-dot tilting touchscreen
- In-body image stabilisation – 7 stops
- Available in silver or black

Kit lens

The matched XF 23mm F2.8 R WR lens is slim and lightweight, yet retains an aperture ring and weather-resistance.

Film dial

The Film Simulation dial is recessed behind a top-plate window. You can now save your own custom recipes to its three FS positions.

Front lever

A front lever controls the view mode, digital zoom and aspect ratio selection, much like on the medium-format GFX100RF.

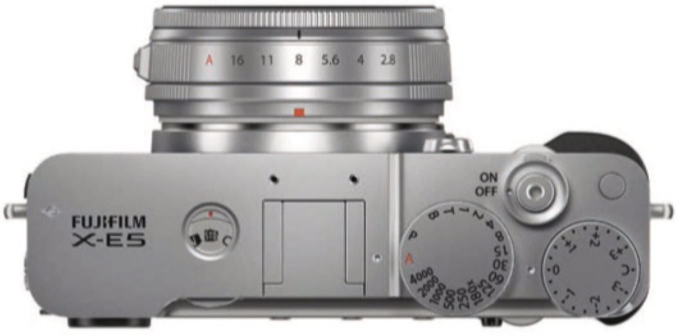
Screen

The super-slim screen tilts down, up and forwards, but sits neatly flush to the back of the camera.

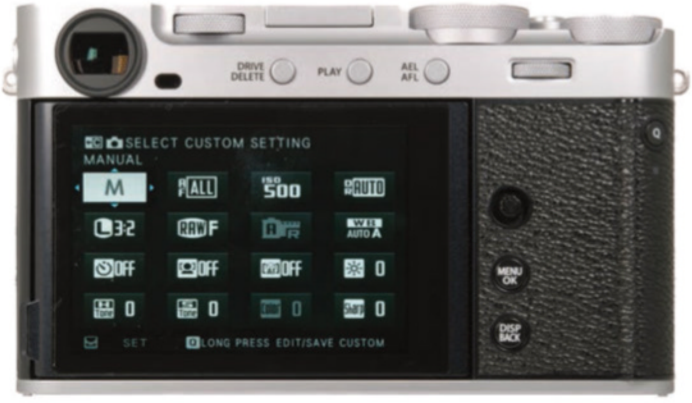
Fujifilm's new X-E5 is a flat-bodied, rangefinder-style mirrorless camera with a corner-mounted electronic viewfinder. Essentially, it repackages most of the technology of the SLR-shaped X-T50 into a smaller form-factor. In many respects, it can be seen as an interchangeable-lens version of the hugely popular X100VI – to the extent that it comes complete with a new slimline 23mm f/2.8 lens.

The X-E5 follows on from the X-E4 which was launched at the start of 2021, but which disappeared from the market a couple of years ago. It's fair to say that the X-E4 wasn't universally well-liked, due to its over-simplified design and lack of any handgrip. But Fujifilm has addressed these criticisms and reinstated controls that went missing from the X-E4, including a physical AF/MF switch and clickable rear dial. It has also added a few more besides, including a Film Simulation mode dial as was previously seen on the X-T50 and the entry-level X-M5. The result is, at first sight, a very likeable camera indeed.

Looking first at the key photographic specifications, these are broadly the same as the X-T50 and X100VI. It employs the same 40MP APS-C X-Trans CMOS 5 sensor and X-Processor 5, and becomes the first model in the X-E series to include in-body image stabilisation. The sensor provides a sensitivity range of ISO 125-12,800 as standard, which can be extended to ISO 64-51,200 at the expense of reduced highlight range at the lower end, and image noise at high settings. You can shoot at up to 8 frames per second using the mechanical



The film dial has its own window on top



The screen tilts down, up, and fully forwards

I was able to shoot with the X-E5 before its official launch

shutter, 13fps using the electronic shutter, or 20fps with a 1.29x crop.

Fujifilm has included the same miniaturised in-body stabilisation unit as in the X-T50, which promises up to 7 stops of shake reduction in the centre of the frame when shooting handheld. Yet it requires only a slight increase in body size, with the X-E5 measuring 125mm x 73mm x 39mm and weighing in at 445g without a lens.

Fujifilm has included its full suite of Film Simulation modes, including the usual favourites such as Reala Ace and Acros, which are set using a physical dial. This has space for three custom positions, and in a welcome update you can now save your own recipes to each, rather than just one of the basic Film modes.

Files are recorded to a single SD card slot which, as on the X-T50, accepts the faster UHS-II type cards. The camera is powered by the long-running NP-W126S battery, which charges via the USB-C port and is rated for 400 shots per charge.

Video recording is available in 6K 30p, 4K 60p, and Full HD 60p, with a Full HD 240p option also available in high-speed mode without audio. You get a standard 3.5mm stereo microphone input and a micro-HDMI output, and it's possible to monitor audio via the USB-C port using a suitable adapter.

Analogue controls

When it comes to control setup, the X-E5 offers a familiar-looking set of analogue controls. Top-plate dials control the exposure compensation and shutter speed, with the latter including a 'P' position for setting the camera quickly to Program auto mode. Unlike the X100VI, you don't get an ISO dial; instead, you use the front electronic dial.

Most of Fujifilm's lenses have an aperture ring, as do many third-party optics. But for those that don't, again you use the front electronic dial, and click it inwards to toggle between ISO and aperture. On the back, there's a small but effective joystick for positioning the focus point and changing settings. Fujifilm's standard Q button is positioned on the corner within easy reach of your thumb, much like on the X100VI, and gives access to the most important secondary camera settings.

A small finger grip on the front gives a surprisingly secure hold, with a nice clear space on the back for your thumb. The build quality feels pretty solid, with a metal shell and dials. It's worth noting, though, that unlike the X100VI, there's no weather-sealing.

First impressions

After a couple of hours shooting with the X-E5 prior to its official launch, it looks as though Fujifilm has done a good job in its bid to make an 'interchangeable-lens X100VI'. Crucially, it includes all the features and tactile controls that make the firm's latest generation of cameras so attractive and engaging to shoot with. It's rare to see an enthusiast-focused camera in this rangefinder-like shape these days, which makes the X-E5 a very welcome addition to the market. I'm really looking forward to giving it a full test.

New 23mm f/2.8 pancake lens

SUPER EBC XF 23mm 1:2.8 R WR ø39
FUJINON ASPHERICAL LENS
A 16 11 8 5.6 4 2.8

To go with the X-E5, Fujifilm has announced a new pancake lens, the Fujinon XF 23mm F2.8 R WR. It's about the same size as the firm's existing XF 27mm F2.8 R WR, at just 23mm long and 90g. But it still includes an aperture ring and weather-resistant construction.

Optically the lens employs 8 elements in 6 groups, including 2 aspherical elements to suppress aberrations and deliver cross-frame sharpness. Despite its diminutive size, it incorporates an 11-blade aperture. The minimum focus distance is 20cm, and there's a thread for 39mm filters.

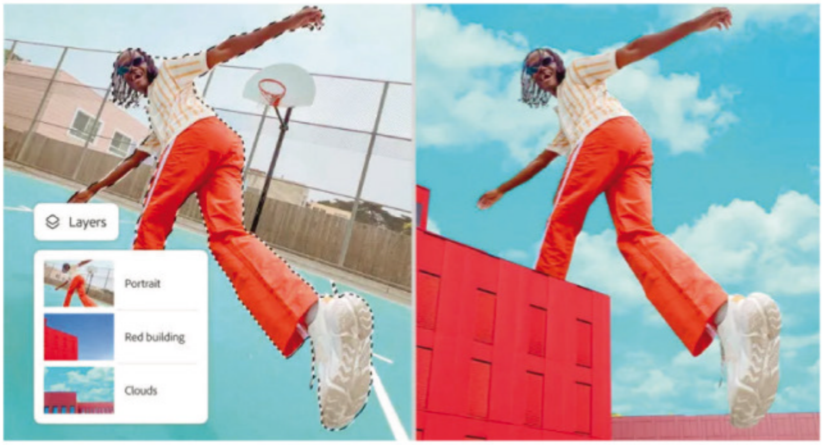
Like many pancake designs, one penalty for the compact size lies with the autofocus. The entire optical group moves back and forwards for focusing, which is inevitably a little slower than internal-focus optics. But this is much the same as for the XF 27mm F2.8 and the X100VI's 23mm f/2 lens.

Design-wise, there's now a small grip on the side of the barrel next to the aperture ring for use when changing lenses, which is a welcome improvement over the 27mm. But the flipside of this is that there's barely space for a manual focus ring, with just a very thin one right at the front. The aperture ring itself gives settings down to f/16 and has a locking button for its A position, which passes control to the camera body.

The Fujifilm XF 23mm F2.8 R WR will be available in silver or black to match the X-E5. Initially it will only be available in a kit with the camera, with standalone sales expected to start in September. Fujifilm said that the price of the new lens will be £399, which is the same as the XF 27mm F2.8 R WR.

FUJIFILM X-E5
FUJINON ASPHERICAL LENS
SUPER EBC XF 23mm 1:2.8 R WR ø39

The X-E5 and 23mm lens will be available in black (as here) or silver (above)



The ability to work with layers is a big selling point of the new Photoshop app

Free Photoshop app for Android phones

A BETA version of Adobe's upgraded Photoshop app is now available for Android – and it's free.

The Photoshop mobile app, which has been available for Apple iPhone since February, enables you to combine and blend images using selections, layers, and masks, remove or replace parts of an image with the Tap Select tool, and get rid of distractions using the Spot Healing Brush.

It's also possible to make accurate selections with Object Select and Magic Wand, and further enhance images with more advanced tools such as Remove and Clone Stamp.

There is also access to Generative Fill, should you wish to experiment with AI-based image generation, and the app ships with a range of tutorials to help you get the most out of it. Your phone will need to be running Android 11 or later, with a minimum of 6GB of RAM (8GB or more is recommended for optimal performance).

Photoshop mobile for Android (beta) is available now from the Google Play app store.

AOP helps photographers be greener

THE ASSOCIATION of Photographers (AOP) is providing more information for photographers and filmmakers to help them to develop low carbon or carbon-free ways of working, along with tools that measure greenhouse gas emissions from a photography shoot or production.

'One of our primary concerns is the environmental impact of generative-AI,' notes Carol Sharp from the AOP Sustainability Group. 'A number of academic studies point to the high energy needs and water use. The carbon impact of image-based generative-AI is substantial and undermines the technology sectors' target of reaching net zero by 2030.' In response, the AOP has produced an Easy Wins guide to help photography businesses to reduce their carbon footprint (you can download this from bit.ly/aopeasywins) along with a template for members to pledge to run a sustainable practice and reduce their environmental impact.

AOP
Association of Photographers
SUSTAINABILITY
EASY WINS FOR
Reducing
Carbon
Footprint
FOR PHOTOGRAPHY BASED BUSINESSES

The AOP says the carbon impact of generative-AI is substantial

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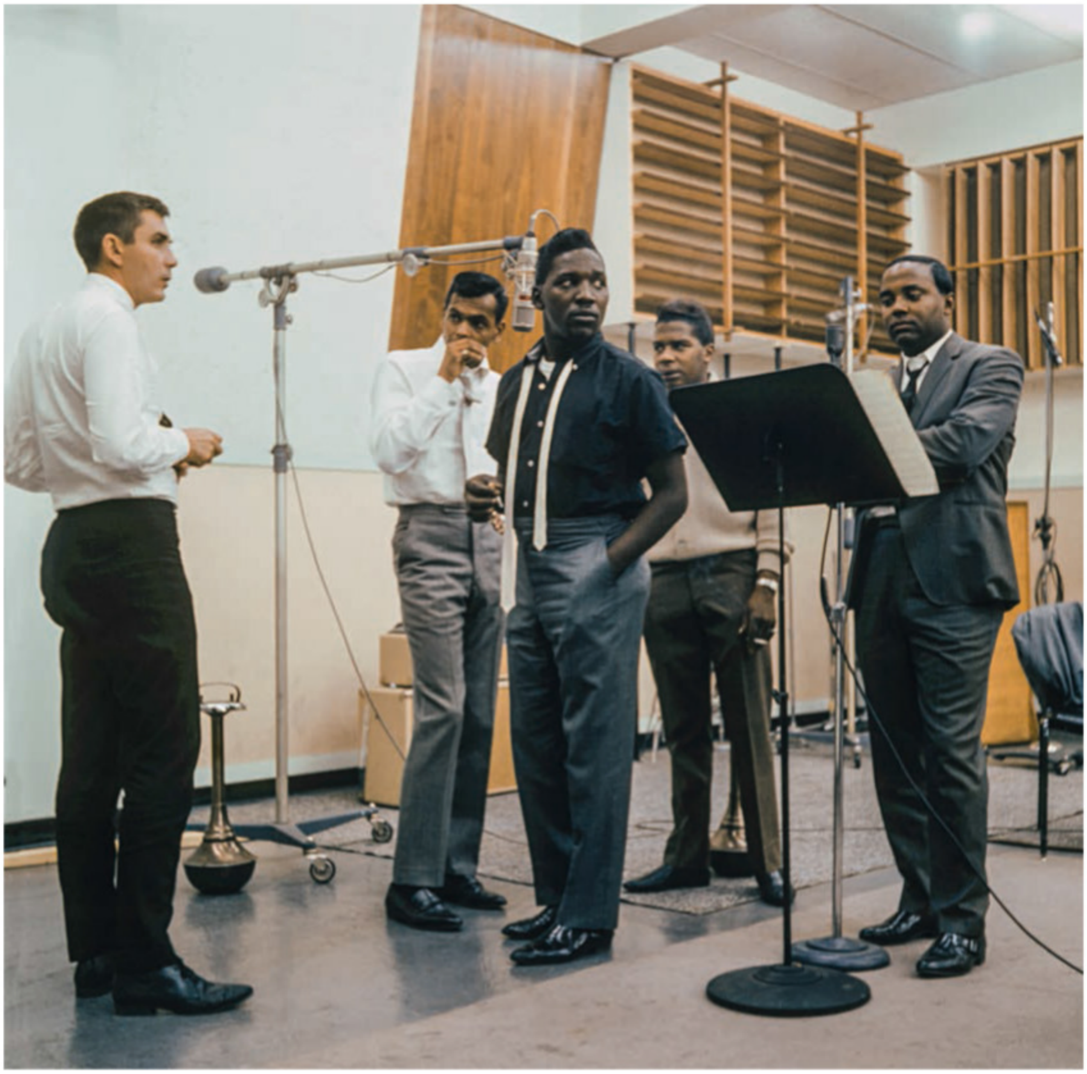

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Left: The Drifters, seen here recording at the label's studio with a young Tom Dowd. Atlantic Records Archives, circa late 1950s

Above: AC/DC at the Hammersmith Odeon in London, during the tour for their *Powerage* album. Ross Halfin, 1978

Right: Aretha Franklin joined Atlantic in 1966. Her songs would define the era. Walter Iooss Jr, Symphony Hall, Newark, New Jersey, 1969

75 Years of Atlantic Records

£150, Taschen, hardback, 462 pages, ISBN: 9783836592055

For lovers of both music and photography, this is a wonderful and lovingly-collated addition to your collection, says **Amy Davies**

For over 75 years, Atlantic Records has been shaping popular culture through the musicians it has pioneered.

Founded in 1947 by Ahmet Ertegun and two fellow music fans, the New York based studios broke new ground by embracing and championing a huge range of different genres. That included many types of black music, including R&B, soul, jazz and hip-hop, as well as from other genres such as rock, pop, dance and more.

This book has taken four years to put together, and as is often the case from Taschen, it's an absolute beast. You might look at the price and think it sounds expensive, but for the size, print quality and pagination, it's actually pretty well priced.

Many of the images in the book have been published here for the first time. There's just about every musical name you could think of – soul pioneers like Aretha Franklin and Ray Charles sit side by side with era-defining pop artists such as the Bee Gees and Abba.

Rock fans can be satisfied with images of Led Zeppelin and the Rolling Stones, and it's brought right up to date by artists such as Charli XCX and Bruno Mars.

And if you thought the musical names were legendary, there are also some huge photography stars on display here too. There are shots from the likes of Annie Leibovitz, Jim Marshall, Lee Friedlander, Anton Corbijn, Albert Watson and David LaChapelle.

Essays from some well-established music writers, as well as from pop star Bruno Mars, are also included, to help us to put it all into context and to take you on a trip down memory lane too.

If you're a big music lover, this is a wonderful treat. You can really feel that this volume has been put together with joy, too. Even for those with a more passing interest in music photography there is so much to enjoy – I loved it.

© WALTER IOOSS JR.

Books & exhibitions

The latest and best books and exhibitions from the world of photography

The authors tell you all you need to know about exploring the Faroe Islands

© PAULA FERNLEY

The Faroe Islands: A Photographers Guide by Paula Fernley & Mike Stephenson

£9.99, Capture A Moment Limited, eBook, 179 pages

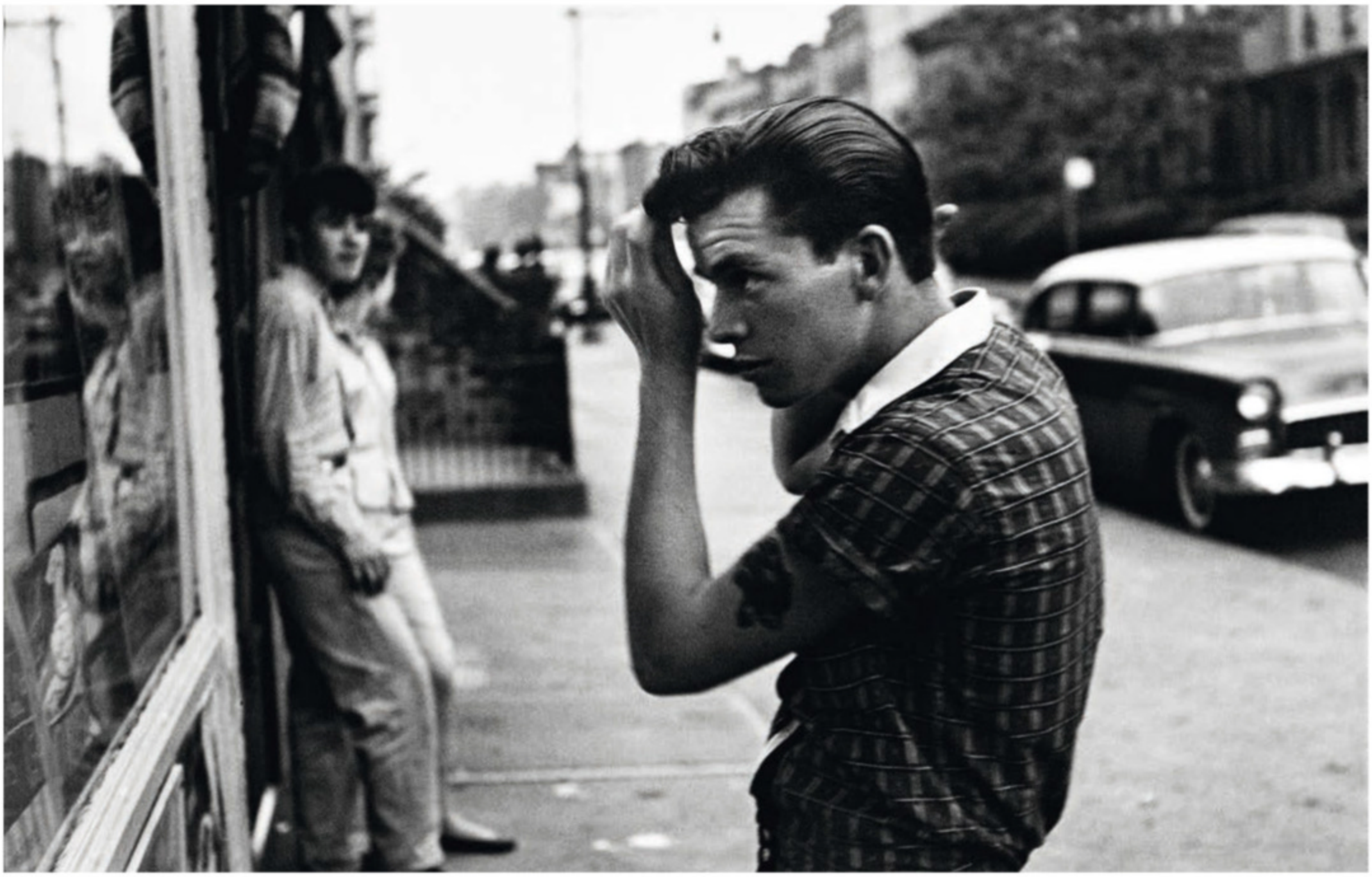
As many landscape photographers know only too well, good outdoor photography isn't always just about your skills behind the camera. There's also a lot of fieldcraft, local knowledge and quite a bit of luck involved too.

In this guide to the stunning locations of the Faroe Islands in the North Atlantic Ocean, you'll be whisked through everything you need to know about exploring and adventuring in such a wild location.

Using the highs and lows of their trips, including how the photographers found their locations, and survived a general strike when you couldn't buy fresh food or fuel, their book is as inspirational as it is essential if you're planning your own trip.

Wildlife photographers can relish getting close-up to puffins and Arctic terns, while you'll also get an insight into weather conditions too. The photographers describe the Faroe Islands as an emerging travel destination, and one which they were unable to find a book to help them navigate – so they made one.

It's available as an eBook, so you can download it to tablets or computers for easy reference for your own travels – or just enjoy the pictures therein.



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Brooklyn Gang, Brooklyn, NY, 1959

The Way Back
by Bruce Davidson

£40, Steidl,
hardcover,
144 pages,
ISBN: 9783969992319

This deep-dive through the back catalogue of Bruce Davidson's enviable six-decade-long career is a must for all lovers of black & white and documentary work.

Published by Steidl (www.steidl.de), all the work in the book has been previously unpublished and spans a timeline between 1957 and 1992, ordered chronologically.

You get a real feel for the versatility of this Magnum legend, stretching all the way back to his earliest assignments to later pieces of work which became internationally recognised.

As such, we see pieces from Brooklyn Gang (1959), work from his extensive coverage of the American Civil Rights movement in Time of Change (1961-1965) and slightly more recent pieces in Subway (1980) and Central Park (1992).

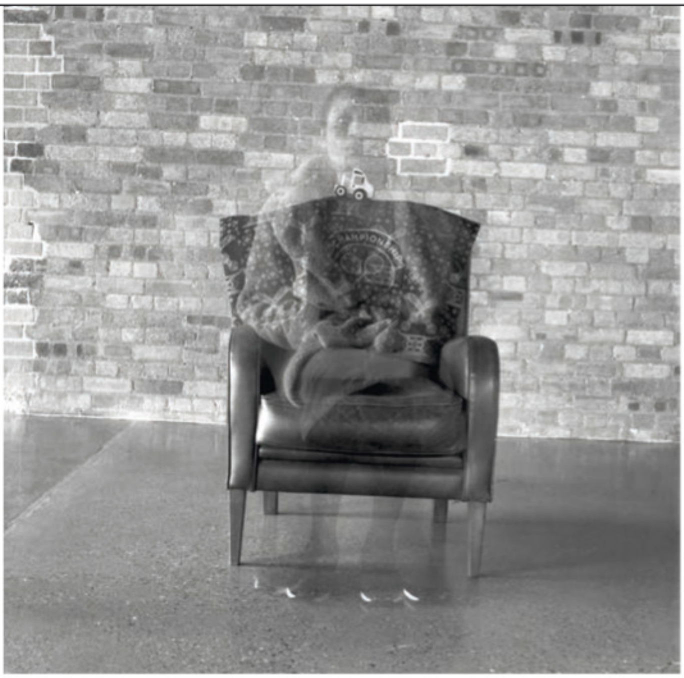
If you're a fan of American imagery, particularly New York City, there are few who can provide a finer portrait of the location. There are also some wonderful pictures taken closer to home too, particularly from Wales in the 1960s.

Many other photographers focus their lenses towards a location, but it's the people and characters which draw Davidson in, and there are so many on display here that the turning of each page becomes a real treat.

This book has been edited by the photographer himself (with help from Donna Ranieri), now at the end of his career. It offers a parting look over his life, giving us an insight into how he himself sees everything he has achieved.

© 2025 BRUCE DAVIDSON

Wales, 1965



Favour – Helene Amouzou, 2025. Courtesy of The Line

Portraits

by Hélène Amouzou

The Royal Docks, London. Until June 2027

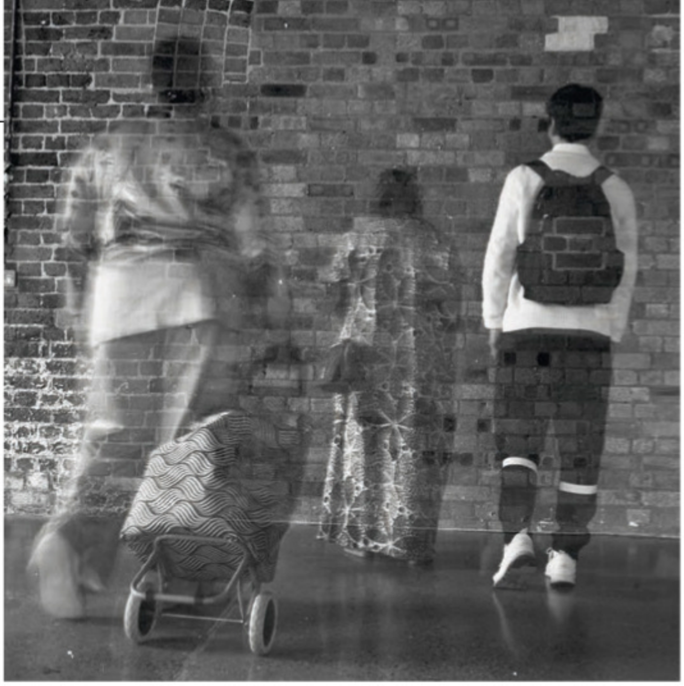
A new site-specific photo installation at the London Docks is set to launch on 18 June. Co-curated by The Line and Arup Phase 2, and working in close collaboration with Praxis, a charity which supports refugees and migrants, the display will feature portraits created by Hélène Amouzou, a Brussels-based photographer.

The project explores themes which include identity, migration and memory and will consist of six photographic portraits installed on bespoke display panels close to City Hall in London's Royal Docks.

Portraits have been created in collaboration with members of Praxis, using objects that create links to the participants' heritage and place of residence. The exhibition is part of Amouzou's residency with The Line, during which she has carried out research into the collections held at London Museum Docklands. The photographs will be on display for a minimum of two years.

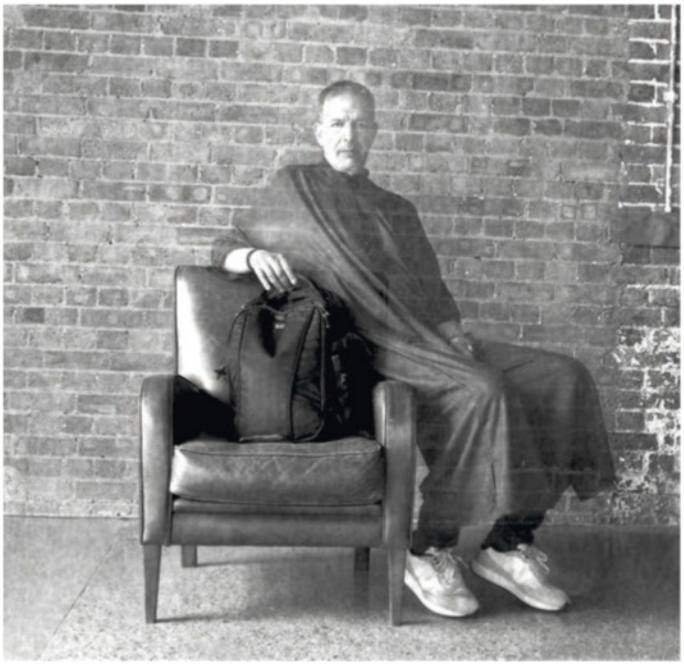
Born in the Togolese Republic in West Africa, Amouzou moved to Brussels in 2004 to study photography and video, and she still lives and works there today.

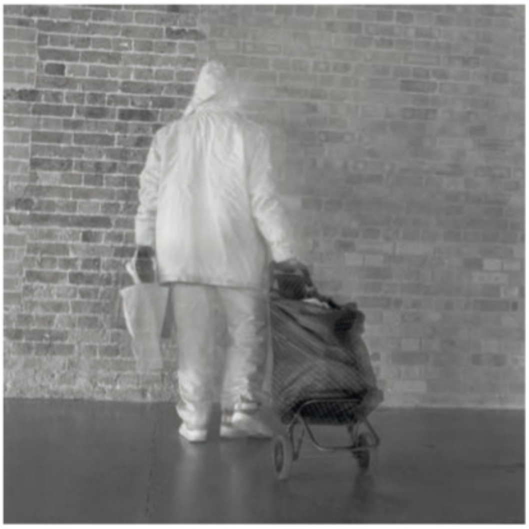
The exhibition has been launched to coincide with Refugee Week. Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries, Justine Simons OBE said, 'A picture can reveal a thousand words and these distinctive images reflect on the journey of those who have made the East End their home, and will resonate with so many people who have settled in London. Our diversity is our greatest strength and this new commission will celebrate that, as we continue to build a better London for everyone.'



Glory_Mercy_Leo – Hélène Amouzou, 2025. Courtesy of The Line

ALLIMAGES © HÉLÈNE AMOUZOU - 2025 - COURTESY OF THE LINE





Above: Mo – Hélène Amouzou, 2025. Courtesy of The Line

Left: Treglodyte – Hélène Amouzou, 2025. Courtesy of The Line

Cost-effective large format

Using 120 film backs, **David Clapp** explores a cost-effective way of experiencing giant film images with the technical strengths of large format

This is an account of a very content digital professional who in the spring of 2015, went from being a 35mm digital professional to an enraged, unshaven, woollen jumper wearing, wired bearded photographic philosopher, working with a camera made of wood. Okay, I didn't actually change any of those things to match a dated large-format stereotype. Neither am I a disciple of the landscape. What I did experience was a photographic revelation, initially fuelled by digital rebellion; a knee-jerk attempt to return to simpler times. How I thought this was at all possible with a technical camera like the Chamonix 045F1 was beyond me, but I was called into it in an unlikely way – by the Canon TS-E 24mm II and help from Tim Parkin at OnLandscape.

Let me confirm right now – if you fully understand the operation of 35mm tilt-and-shift lenses, you will already understand a large percentage of the large format camera. As tilting and shifting are part of the camera's design, the beauty is this can be applied to every lens. Working with a large format, you soon learn that tilt is an absolute essential to accurate focusing. So exactly why is this?

Lens line up

I currently own four large-format lenses. All of them are Nikon Nikkor prime lenses and I own a 65mm, 90mm, 150mm and 300mm. Your creative 35mm mind may be thinking that is a decent range, but now divide each number by three and you get 22mm, 30mm, 50mm and 100mm respectively (the same as a 24-105mm). This appears to be rather unexciting at first, but remember they can all tilt and shift.

It is important to understand that when you increase the capture area (a 300mm LF lens being a 100mm in 35mm terms) you still have to work with the physics and the depth-of-field restrictions of a 300mm lens. Using tilt and shift on a levelled tripod gives you the flexibility to be able to firstly 'place' the image plane without altering the camera angle, removing vertical convergence by

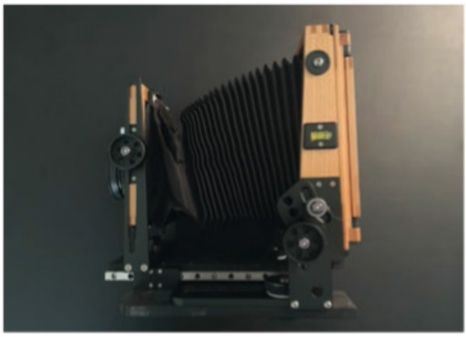
This simple sideline woodland image was a delight to compose, the 90mm (30mm equivalent) giving an airy space and Ektar giving the colour magic. Chamonix 045F1 and Nikkor SW 90mm F4.5 @ f/16 on Ektar 100

The Chamonix 045F1 large format camera with lens attached. It is a thing of beauty, with bellows and teak wooden frame

shifting the image up and down. Then the angle of the image plane can be 'tilted' (tipped down or up) or 'swung' (left to right). Again this means it is possible to overcome the limits, positioning the focal plane to intersect your subject at the point of interest, before stopping the lens down to increase the depth of field.

Different backs saves money

When I first got the camera, I already knew I would not be shooting 5x4in film. Film was becoming extremely expensive and I liked the idea of shooting a few different 120 formats. The first back I got was a Horseman 6x9, which gives a 3:2 capture area, the same ratio as a digital



Above: Profile of the large format, showing the front and rear standard, separated by bellows

Left: A 6x9 film image confused the audience with a standard digital 3:2 ratio. We associate all other ratios with film by default. Chamonix 045F1 and Nikkor W 150mm F5.6, @ f/22 on Portra 160

Still evening conditions at a winter Land's End, working solely with a 6x12 format opens compositions you would not otherwise consider. Chamonix 045F1 and Nikkor W150mm F5.6 @ f/16 on Velvia 50

6 LARGE-FORMAT KIT TIPS

1 Filters

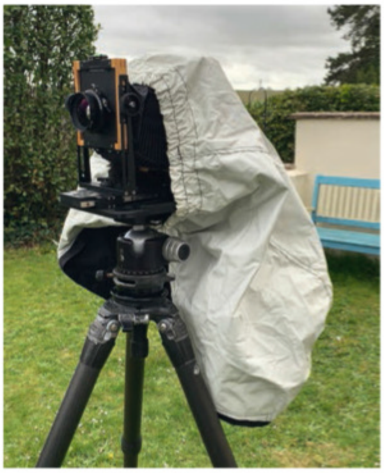
I haven't used filters for digital since 2008, but they're essential for slide film in particular. I own a set of LEE Filters, 0.3x 0.6x and 0.9, both soft/hard step and a polariser. I rarely use the soft step as the diameter of the lenses is a lot smaller than 35mm format lenses.

2 Loupe

A quality loupe is essential for perfect focusing. It magnifies a small section of the ground glass screen. The detail this camera can reveal is absolutely astonishing, so the loupe will help you attain precision focus and help you make imperative tilt-and-shift decisions.

3 Meter

I bought a Sekonic D758 spot meter after two disasters with legacy eBay purchases. This meter is hands down the best I've used, with the ability to average readings, create midtone points, work with multiple ISO films. Working with slide or negative film requires entirely separate approaches and this meter delivers.



The camera and dark cloth attached. This blocks out light to enable bright illumination of the rear screen

camera. Using plastic card, I made a mask and slotted it behind the ground glass screen, using 5x4 like crop sensor. Everyone who saw these initial shots liked the tones, but said it 'didn't look like film'. Slightly wounded, I realised it was simply the ratio pulling them back to digital.

I then bought an affordable Horseman 6x12 back on eBay, which gives 2:1 ratio panoramas. This felt perfect in the landscape, so I headed out to Dartmoor and local magic started to happen. Using Ektar 100 colour negative and Velvia 50 slide film, I went back to favoured locations where I already

4 120 backs

With the expense of film at an all-time high, 120 backs can give a lot of variety. I have 6x12 and 6x9 backs, as I own an array of other 6x6/6x7 medium format gear that would overlap, but a large format can be a cost-effective way to own all formats, for a fraction of the cost.

5 Dark cloth

Buy a cloth with good elastic to fit over the rear of the camera. It's like sitting inside your own upside-down cinema and can be quite relieving in cold and windy weather. I also own a right angle viewer which I initially preferred, but the dark cloth/loupe will give precision results.

6 Levelling base

A levelling base is essential when working with tilt-and-shift technical cameras. Unlock/level/lock. Then attach the camera, assemble and then make small adjustments to critically align. All large format cameras have X Y and Z bubble levels to help with this.

This desaturated farm scene was perfect for expired NPC160. The image was aligned from the roof cornice, using the loupe to critically focus the stopped-down aperture. Chamonix 045F1 and Nikkor W 150mm F5.6 @ f/22 on Fuji NPC 160

understood the composition, so I could work on my technical skills. Naturally mistakes were made – focusing was out, metering was too. With a loupe round my neck and a cloth over my head, I felt as though I was 'crafting an image' for the first time, albeit upside down and back to front.

Forced improvements

How easy it would be to break trail and head back to the conveniences of digital, but I kept working hard at it. In winter 2017 I made a point of taking it on a small photo tour with some close friends to Norway. I would set up surrounded by curiosity, realise it just wasn't worth wasting film and then to everyone's disappointment, pack it all away. It took three days before light, conditions and composition finally collided and they collectively heard that shutter click. I was carried around laughing on their shoulders in jubilation. To them, this seemed a completely insane but tangible pursuit and I knew by this point that I was obsessed. The 6x12 format is a delight, so I bought another 6x12 back when a cheap one found its way to me. There is something about these easy-on-the-eye panoramas; not too wide (like 6x17) and so appealing to explore.

An unlikely end to the day at Great Gables was translated by Velvia 50 into such wonderful colours. The detail in this image is astonishing. Chamonix 045F1 and Nikkor M 300mm F9 @ f/22 on Velvia 50

Thoughts on home scanning

The Nikon LS9000

So how do I scan a 6x12? Using my Nikon LS9000. The maximum scan size I can achieve is 6x9cm. It is simply a case of loading film into the glass film holder and scanning it as two separate 6x9 linear scanned images (which are similar to a raw file). Then I stitch the scans together in Photoshop before converting them, using a plug-in called ColorPerfect.

Image sizes

The size of a 6x12 scan is approximately 170MP, which yields 18000 x 9000 images that are 16bit and over a gigabyte in size. The LS9000 scans images at 4000dpi, so when you convert that to 300dpi, each image is 60 inches (that's 5ft long!). Most computers can now handle files that big, but it was a struggle eight years ago. Although this may seem like you are flexing your digital biceps, it gives a lot of imaging options.

Flatbed choices

Other options are to use a flatbed scanner, like the popular Epson V850. This will be able to scan an image in one go, including 5x4in images. These devices cannot produce superior linear scans, but they are affordable and decent scanners for both colour and black & white. I owned and then sold my flatbed, then I was able to source a Nikon LS9000; but I would own one if I was shooting 5x4.

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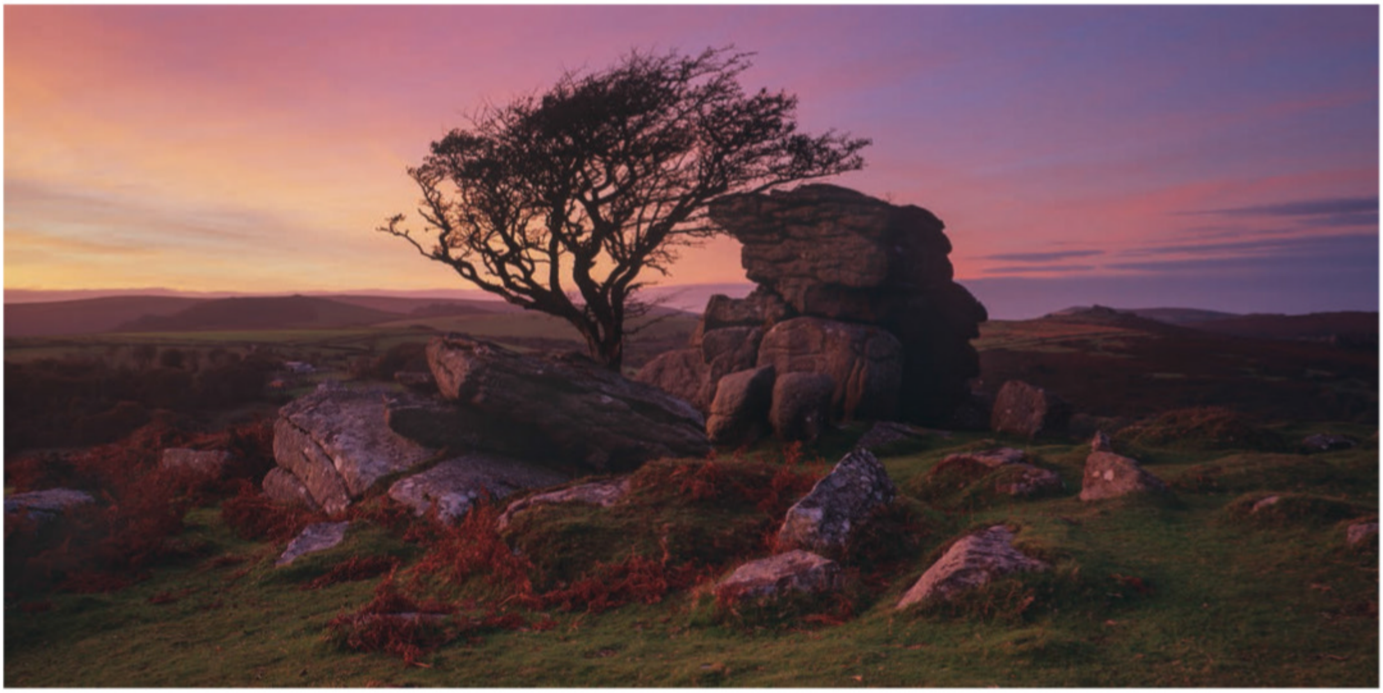
Considerations

You don't suddenly become spiritualised when you start to use a large format. You don't climb aboard and fast track your status to artist or graduate to some kind of exclusive club. You are still yourself, mistakes and all, standing on the moors wrestling with an unnecessary technical complexity, but this time with a cloth over your head, looking at the camera screen from the back row of a weird upside-down cinema.

I could lie and say how wonderful it is working with larger images but really it isn't. Scanning a single shot takes ages, and cleaning dust is an arduous task that's best accompanied by good music. The margin for error is tiny when working with limited ISO 50 film and your scans will show every mistake. Yet against all odds when you lift those well-exposed transparencies to a kitchen window, it all makes perfect sense.

Above: The tripod underwater, setting up this shot squeezed against a cave wall was incredibly difficult. Portra 160 gave a realistic render of this almost monochrome subject. Chamonix 045F1 and Nikkor W150mm F5.6 on Portra 160

The plane of focus was swung to the left, to angle the plane from the left-hand side ferns to the far right-hand side. This conquers any depth-of-field issues with ease. Chamonix 045F1, Nikkor W150mm F5.6 @ f/16 on Velvia 50



Why it **Works**

Using the 150mm F5.6 lens, the camera was reset and focused. The subject was firstly shifted using the front standard, to balance it centrally, leaving generous space either side. The next correction was to align the plane of focus. Using a loupe for magnification on the ground glass screen, the front standard was loosened to tilt the lens downwards very slightly. This brought the foreground into sharpness and then the front standard was swung, to align the focal plane left to right.

I stopped down to f/22 (try not to think in 35mm format terms) and then extensive meter readings were made for Fujifim Velvia 50. A 2-stop grad was used on the sky with a shutter speed of 5secs required, adjusted for film reciprocity failure.

This is crafting an image – slowly, methodically and accurate assembly, pressing the shutter at the optimum time.

The sense of anticipation, working in good light is so memorable. And the triumph of looking at a glowing transparency is equally as satisfying.

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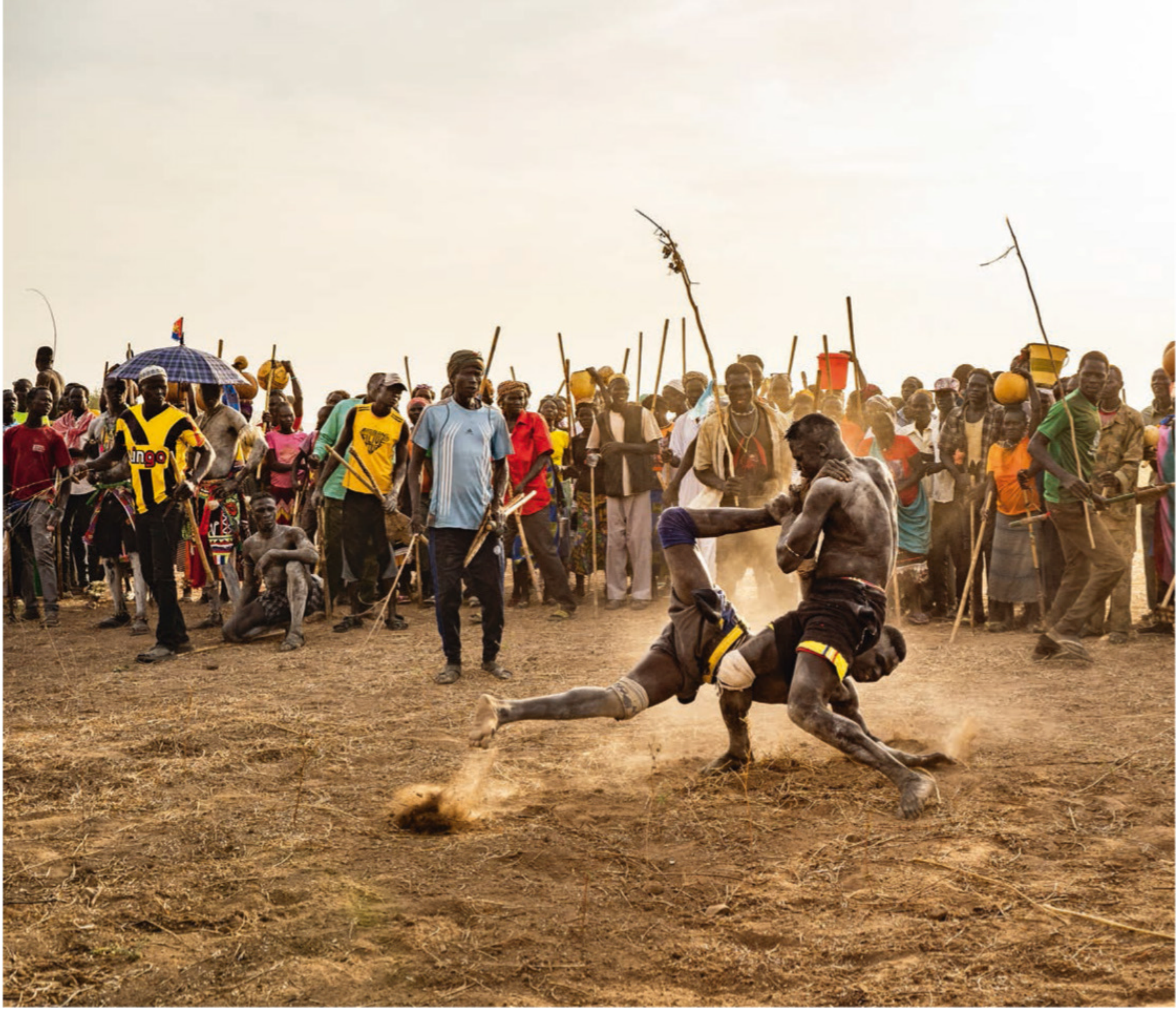
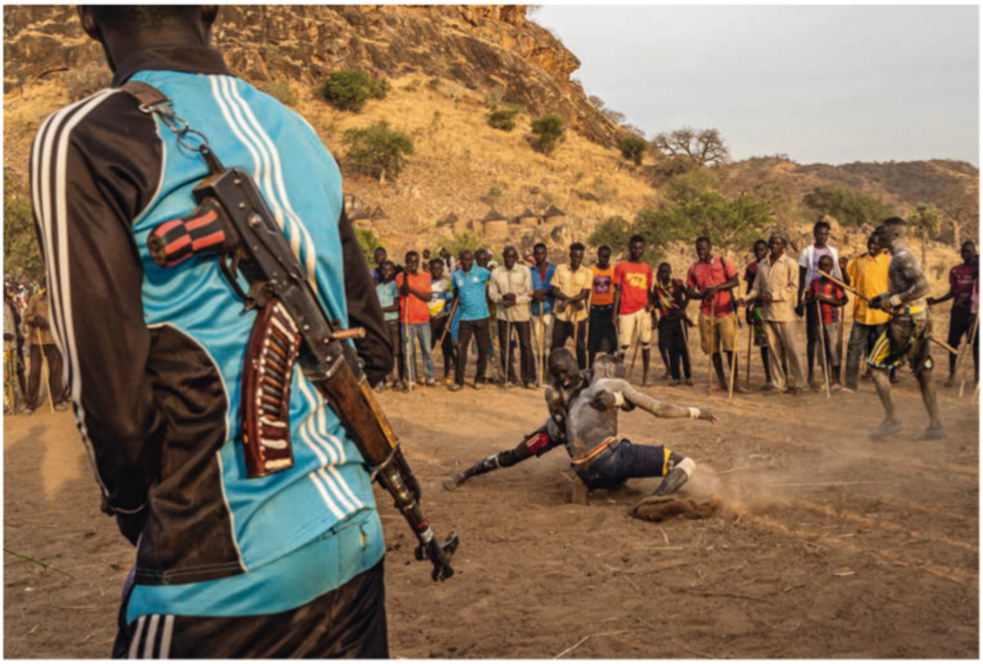


ALL IMAGES ©TARIQ ZAIDI

Wrestling with identity and resilience

Amid the turmoil of Sudan's civil war, the ancient tradition of Nuba wrestling endures as a living symbol of resilience, identity and hope. Photographer Tariq Zaidi journeys to the heart of South Kordofan to capture a culture fighting to survive. **Peter Dench** finds out more



Amid the rocky hills and fertile plains of Sudan's Nuba Mountains, a centuries-old tradition of wrestling continues to thrive, even as conflict tears the nation apart. Wrestling here is more than sport – it is identity, heritage and resistance. British photographer Tariq Zaidi's latest series, captured in February 2025, brings this powerful cultural ritual vividly to life at a time when Sudan's social fabric faces its greatest strains.

Nuba wrestling is one of Africa's oldest continuous sporting traditions, rooted in rites of passage, agricultural celebration, and spiritual devotion. Matches often coincide with key points in the farming calendar – after the harvest or during the dry season when communities come together to test strength and honour ancestry. Victory is simple: the first man to force his opponent to the ground wins.

These bouts are about more than physical prowess; they are affirmations of communal pride, social status, and the enduring spirit of the Nuba people. Zaidi says, 'In a world where so much is disappearing, it felt urgent to photograph a culture holding fast to its identity.

'This project was over a year in the planning. It began with a conversation with an anthropologist colleague, who suggested that – despite ongoing conflict – there might still be a window to witness and document traditional cultural practices.'

Nuba wrestling first captured global attention through the lens of pioneering photographers. In the late 1940s, George Rodger, a founding member of Magnum Photos, documented the wrestlers in a series that highlighted the dignity and vibrancy of Nuba life. Later, controversial (because of her deep involvement with Nazi Germany) German photographer and filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl spent months living among the Nuba, producing the book *The Last of the Nuba* (1974), which, despite its problematic framing, remains a visual record of a proud and resilient culture.

Zaidi knew of the visual heritage but was not directly affected. 'I typically work in colour as it better serves my intent to convey mood, nuance, and environmental context. It's a core part of my visual language rather than a deliberate reference to earlier work.'

Left: Victory in Nuba wrestling is achieved when a wrestler forces his opponent to the ground. To ensure fairness, wrestlers are paired by age, allowing matches to test skill rather than sheer physical strength

Above: A spectator armed with an assault rifle watches Nuba wrestling, a tradition that once served as training for young men, preparing them for battle

Today, as Sudan grapples with civil strife between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF), documenting Nuba wrestling takes on new urgency. Where Rodger and Riefenstahl captured a relatively untouched way of life, Zaidi's images show a culture persisting in the face of profound disruption.

He explains, 'Due to the sensitive nature of the region and in order to protect the safety of those who assisted – particularly local guides, fixers, and the communities visited – I'm unable to share specific details. The area remains highly volatile and at risk of targeted violence.'

Tariq Zaidi's career has been defined by a commitment to telling underreported stories of resilience and cultural identity. Born and based in London, Zaidi left a successful corporate career to pursue photojournalism full-time, teaching himself the craft and earning international recognition. His images have graced *The Guardian*, BBC, *The New York Times*, *National Geographic*, and many others.

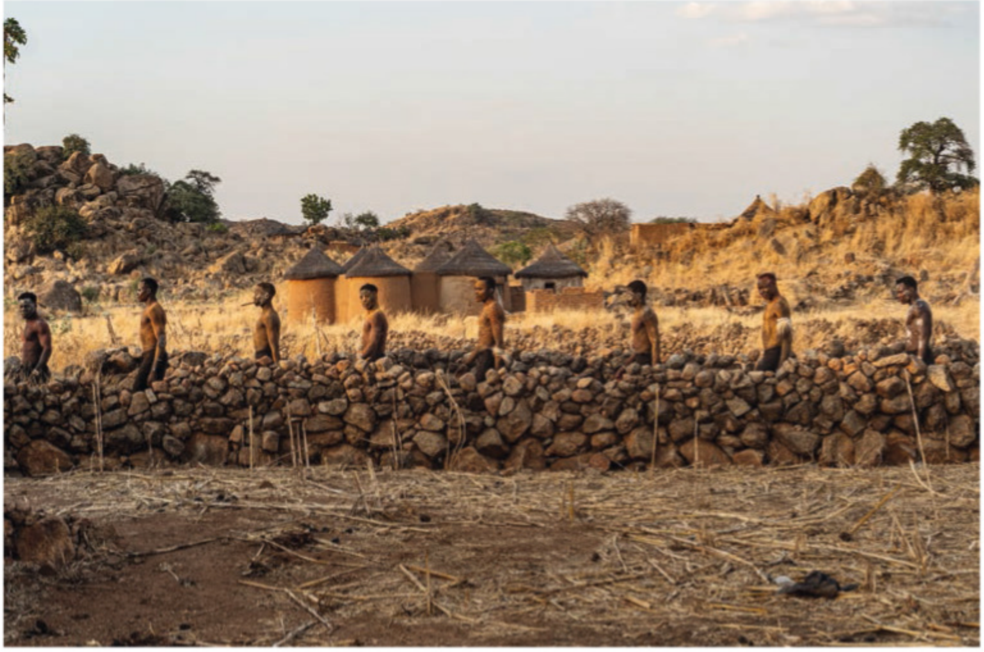
Through projects such as Sapeurs: Ladies and Gentlemen of the Congo and also North Korea: The People's Paradise (featured in previous issues of this magazine) Zaidi has consistently sought out communities navigating hardship with dignity and pride. His latest work in Sudan continues this mission, offering a deeply respectful, human-centred portrayal of a people determined to safeguard their traditions amid war and displacement.

Zaidi's images and choice of gear capture all the drama, ritual, and community spirit of a Nuba wrestling tournament. Crowds gather under the baking sun; children climb trees for a better view; drums beat as wrestlers stride into the arena, bodies covered in ash to honour tradition and make gripping harder for opponents. Zaidi recalls: 'Despite the constant threat of violence, the sense of joy and pride at these events was overwhelming.'

He continues, 'I used a Sony Alpha 7 III paired with a Sony FE 24-50mm F2.8 G lens. It's a flexible, lightweight lens well-suited for capturing both close, personal moments and wider scenes. I worked exclusively with natural light – no flash, reflectors, or tripods. My advice? Remain discreet and respectful in sensitive environments – stay light and agile.'

In these matches, brute force is less important than strategy, speed, and honour. Wrestlers, often clad only in ochre-painted skin, point out their opponents with a dance-like flourish before each bout. Ash smeared across bodies speaks not just to technique but to spiritual beliefs, symbolising purification and ancestral connection.

Victory is celebrated with unbridled joy. Champions are hoisted onto shoulders, paraded before the cheering crowd, and showered with songs composed by village women in their honour. For young men, a wrestling win is more than personal glory – it is a rite of passage, boosting their standing within the community and, often, increasing their desirability as



marriage partners.

Zaidi's photographs do not shy away from the realities of modern Sudan. Armed spectators, displaced communities, and the intrusion of modern weaponry into ancient traditions provide a stark backdrop to the scenes of unity and celebration. In this tension – between preservation and change, resilience and rupture – Zaidi finds the emotional heart of the story. 'It wasn't just the athleticism; it was the incredible sense of belonging, of generations bound together through ritual,' he adds.

Today, wrestling among the Nuba is a defiant assertion of identity in a country where minority cultures have often faced marginalisation or worse. Holding a wrestling match in a refugee camp, as some displaced Nuba communities now do, is an act of cultural resistance as much as it is a community gathering.

While some urban centres such as Khartoum (before the current conflict) saw attempts to commercialise the sport – complete with referees and prize money – the spirit of traditional wrestling remains strongest in the villages and camps of South Kordofan. Here, it continues to function as an expression of community resilience, connecting generations and providing a sense of normalcy amid chaos.

This cultural tenacity is mirrored across Africa. Traditions such as Senegal's Laamb, Nigeria's Kokowa, and Ethiopia's Tigil similarly blend sport with spirituality, community bonding, and cultural pride. In each case, wrestling is not just entertainment – it is identity made physical.

Symbol of unity

Despite war, displacement, and the creeping influence of globalisation, Nuba wrestling endures. As Sudan's national sport after football, it remains a symbol of unity for the Nuba people and an essential thread in the wider tapestry of African wrestling traditions. Zaidi says: 'I hope these images show that heritage isn't a relic of the past. For the Nuba people, it's a living, breathing part of survival.'

Zaidi's project stands as a vital contribution to the ongoing story of the Nuba Mountains. By focusing his lens not on despair but on celebration, skill, and community, he offers a portrait of hope at a time when it is desperately needed. His photographs, rich with humanity and pride, remind us that traditions – when nurtured – can outlast even the gravest challenges.

'In the face of unimaginable hardship, the Nuba people have not just survived – they have flourished culturally,' Zaidi notes. 'Their wrestling is not simply a sport. It is a language of resilience.' Thanks to photographers like Tariq Zaidi, that language now has a new global audience.

You can follow more of Tariq's work on Instagram (**@tariqzaidiphoto**), Facebook (**@tariqzaidiphotography**) and his website **www.tariqzaidi.com**

Far left, bottom: Crowds gather to watch wrestling competitions as children climb trees for a better view

Left, top: Portrait of a wrestler. Nuba body painting primarily features yellow and red ochre, with white and black also used

Above: A group of men walk through a Nuba village on their way to a rite of passage ceremony, culminating in a traditional wrestling match before their community

Left: A man rests in the grass beside the wrestling area

Right: A woman is lifted by a wrestler

At a glance

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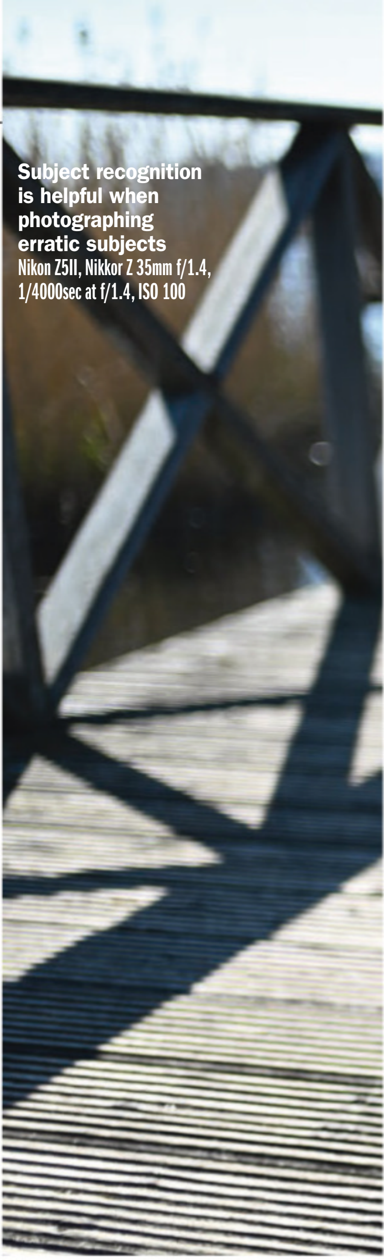
Nikon Z5II

With a fantastic balance between price and performance, **Amy Davies** asks if this is the entry-level full-frame model to beat?



Subject recognition is helpful when photographing erratic subjects
Nikon Z5II, Nikkor Z 35mm f/1.4, 1/4000sec at f/1.4, ISO 100

For and against

+ Excellent value

+ Good range of compatible lenses

+ Fully articulating touchscreen

+ Proven good sensor

+ Multiple subject detection autofocusing

+ Great handling

+ Customisable buttons

− No top-plate LCD for quick viewing of settings

− 4K 60fps video has a crop, and no higher resolutions available

− Less portable/travel-friendly than APS-C or MFT rivals

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Data file

Sensor	24.5MP BSI-CMOS, 35.9x23.9mm
Output size	6048 x 4032
Focal length mag	1x
Lens mount	Nikon Z
Shutter speeds	15min - 1/8000sec
Sensitivity	ISO 100-64,000
Exposure modes	PASM, Auto, U1-U3
Metering	Matrix, centre-weighted, spot, highlight
Exposure comp	+/-5EV in 0.3EV steps
Cont shooting	30fps (JPEG), up to 15fps (raw)
Screen	3.2in, 2.1m-dot fully articulated
Viewfinder	3.69m dots, 0.8x, 3000nits, 60fps
AF points	273
Video	4K 30p (uncropped), 4K 60p (DX crop), Full HD 120p
External mic	3.5mm stereo
Memory card	2x UHS-II SD
Power	EN-EL15c
Battery life	380 shots (EVF), 390 (LVF)
Dimensions	134x100.5x72mm
Weight	700g with battery and card

The Nikon Z5II follows on from 2020's Z5, with a good range of improvements. As well as the full-frame sensor, it's also got a range of enticing features including a fully articulating touchscreen, a high-resolution viewfinder, dual card slots and uncropped 4K 30fps recording. And all of that in a body that costs less than £1,600. Primarily, this is a camera aimed at enthusiasts without the budget for higher-priced full-frame models, including Nikon's own Z6III, Z7II, and Z8. However, the good news is that it inherits a lot of the features of those cameras.

The original Z5 is now five years old, so it was ripe for a refresh. You'll still be able to buy that camera for a while, with this new release likely to cause a drop in price – so it could still be a good option. If you've already got a Z5, you might also think about holding on to it too.

I'd also argue that it's fair to think of the Z5II as an upgrade to older models such as the Nikon Z6II and Nikon Z6, or potentially even the original Nikon Z7 (depending on how much you need a high pixel count). That's thanks to things like better subject recognition, faster autofocus, plus a fully articulating and brighter touchscreen.

I've been using the Z5II with a Nikkor Z 24-120mm f/4 S lens, as well as other lenses which I think enthusiasts might realistically pair with it. This includes the Nikkor Z 35mm f/1.4, 85mm f/1.8 S and 28-400mm f/4-8 VR lenses.

There's a range of different kit

variants available, including a 24-50mm f/4-6.3 kit lens, a more premium 24-70mm f/4 and an all-rounder type option of a 24-200mm f/4-6.3 VR zoom. Personally, I'd probably avoid the 24-50mm – it's not a bad lens, but the 24-70mm is better and provides more flexibility. The 24-200mm is a good option if you want the flexibility to shoot subjects such as wildlife.

Features

The 24MP sensor found inside the Z5II is the same as that in the Nikon Zf, so we already know it should be capable of producing excellent images. Unlike more expensive models, it's not partially or fully-stacked, which helps to keep the price down. There's now the faster Expeed 7 processor, which brings with it improvements to operational speeds when compared to the Nikon Z5, especially when it comes to autofocus. There's also the promise of cleaner images at mid-range to high ISOs such as ISO 3200-6400.

Subject detection now gives you the option to automatically recognise a greater range of subjects. It'll now pick up on people, animals, birds and vehicles (cars, motorbikes, trains and airplanes). Further to this, Nikon says that the Z5II is capable of picking out such subjects when they occupy as little as 3% of the image area. 3D tracking technology has also been included for this model.

If you're somebody who likes photographing fast-moving subjects, another significant upgrade comes in the form of continuous shooting, which is now available at a much more usable 15fps when shooting in raw format, or up to 30fps if you're happy to stick with JPEG only. An interesting new feature is Pre-release capture, for recording up to a second's worth of images before you've fully depressed the shutter release (again, this requires shooting JPEG only).

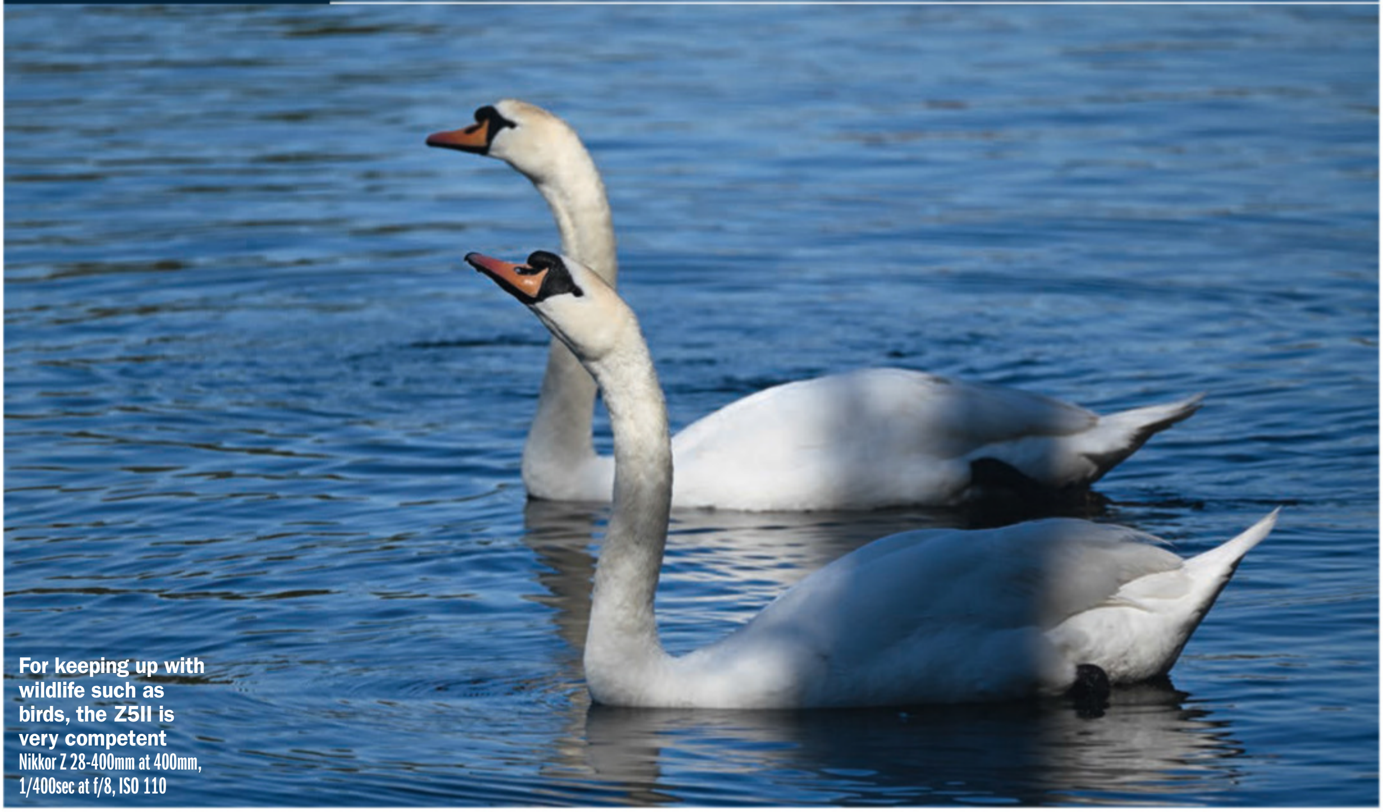
In-built image stabilisation gives you up to 7.5-stops of shake reduction at the centre of the image, or 6 stops at the edges. Focus point VR is included, which is something also found in the Nikon Zf – it's intended to give sharper results when the subject is off-centre.

Video users may find the Z5II a more appealing prospect than its predecessor, and indeed several of Nikon's other full-frame models too. It has 4K 30fps recording which is uncropped. You can go up to 60fps but a DX (APS-C) crop will be applied. But beyond that, the fact that the camera has a fully articulating screen and dual SD card slots will be a bonus to vloggers or just those who like their camera to be able to do a bit of everything.

Of course, there's all the usual features we expect from modern cameras too, including USB-C charging, plus built-in Bluetooth and Wi-Fi (meaning you can pair the camera with Nikon's Snapbridge app).

Nikon Z5II vs Z5

Given that there's half a decade in between releases of the original Z5 and the Z5II, we can rightfully expect a decent set of upgrades and new



For keeping up with wildlife such as birds, the Z5II is very competent
Nikkor Z 28-400mm at 400mm, 1/400sec at f/8, ISO 110

features for the Z5II, which thankfully we do get.

While the pixel count is virtually identical between the two sensors, the Z5II's is backside-illuminated, and it's also joined by a better processor (Expeed 7 vs Expeed 6). In conjunction, this should see cleaner high ISO images, and there's also a higher maximum sensitivity setting now available.

The new AF detection system, inherited from elsewhere in Nikon's range, boosts its capability to nine different subjects, where previously it was just two (people and dogs). In practice, I've also found it a lot more accurate and responsive, even with those same subjects. AF is promised to be 68% faster than the Z5, and it can also now focus in darker conditions (-10EV compared to -4.5EV before). There's also now 7.5 stops of compensation provided by the IBIS, when it was 5 stops before.

Continuous shooting speed is a big improvement, giving you up to 30fps (in JPEG only), or 15fps if you're happy to shoot silently and in raw. You'll get 14fps with the mechanical shutter. This compares well to 4.5fps before, making the Z5II a viable choice for sports, wildlife and just general life, which might include erratic children, pets and so on. The Pre-release capture mode for up to 1second of pre-recording of frames before the shutter is depressed is also useful.

Video has improved. Previously, the Z5's maximum capability was 4K 30fps with a crop. Now, you get 4K 30fps without a crop. The 60fps option is still cropped, but it's important to remember this is an entry-level model. You also get new additions such as Product Review mode, and the addition of things such as log recording. The maximum duration of video recording has dropped to 85 minutes (before it was 115 minutes), but that's unlikely to be a huge problem for most.

A new button for accessing Picture Controls hints that there's new stuff here too. You now get 31 different types of Picture Controls, compared to 8 before. The ability to shoot with these already applied at the point of capture has proven very popular.

While the viewfinder remains the same size and resolution as before, it's now brighter (3,000 nits vs 1,000) which should make a significant difference when shooting in bright and sunny conditions. The screen sees even bigger differences, being both higher in resolution (2.1m dots, compared to 104m dots), and with the ability to fully articulate to face forward. Both screens are 3.2 inches, and both are touch-sensitive, but the newer model gives you additional functionality, such as the ability to use the touchscreen when shooting through the viewfinder.

If you've already got a Z5, Z6 or Z6II, there's plenty here to think about upgrading for, depending on the kinds of subjects you shoot. If you mainly shoot static subjects, aren't too bothered about movie recording, don't shoot too much in low light, don't have much need for Picture Controls and are happy with the viewfinder and tilting screen, then your wallet may thank you for sticking with what you've got. But for most, there's plenty to tempt you to replace your older camera.

Build and handling

In most respects, the Z5II is very similar in design to its predecessor, and also to the Z6 and Z7 series. It has a fairly chunky front grip and an array of buttons mostly

Shooting at mid-high ISOs results in nicely clean images
Nikkor Z 24-120mm f/4 S at 24mm, 1/25sec at f/8, ISO 4500

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collected on the right-hand side. There's a classic dual-dial setup to adjust shutter speed and aperture at the front and rear of the hand grip, as well as dedicated buttons for ISO, movie recording and exposure compensation.

Next to the mode dial is a new button that gives direct access to Picture Controls, of which there are now 31. If you're thinking you'd never use those, don't worry, because along with most of the other buttons, it can be customised to control something else.

On the back of the camera, there's a useful joystick which you can use for moving the focus point around the scene, as well as navigating through menus and so on. I find my thumb naturally falls onto the joystick when I'm shooting through the viewfinder, so I generally use the joystick by preference over the touchscreen or the d-pad when setting the focus point. It's nice to have this option available, something which is missing from the Nikon Zf.

The only two buttons not on the right-hand side of the back of the camera are a drive mode button, and a delete button. Use the drive mode to switch on (or off) fast continuous focusing. There are a couple of customisable function buttons to the side of the lens mount. I'm going to be honest and I say I never use these – I find them to be a little bit awkward to access.

Like the Z5, there are two card slots behind the rear thumb rest. They both accept SD cards and are compliant with the faster UHS-II standard. How you use those slots is down to personal preference. Some like to record different file formats to each (i.e. JPEG to one, raw format to the other), or use one for stills and the other for video. You can also set it up to work as a simple overflow once you've filled one card, or alternatively backup everything to both cards.

I prefer to have two SD card slots than one CF Express and one SD. The former type of card is a lot more expensive, and only really necessary for those shooting and transferring at super-fast speeds.

Viewfinder and screen

Whether you prefer an articulating screen or a tilting one is the subject of some debate. On the whole, I prefer a tilting screen. This is because it's rare for me to shoot movies or selfies, while I find tilting is more useful for things like street photography. Others will much prefer an articulating device for their own reasons.

I don't dislike articulating screens enough for it to put me off the Z5II, and I very much like being able to tuck the screen safely away when I'm walking around with the camera slung over my body in a cross-body harness.

The viewfinder is high resolution at 3.69m-dots, and has a good 0.8x magnification which is the same as its predecessor. It's not as detailed as something like the Z6III's, but then you'd expect that from a sub-£1,600 camera. It's still very usable and I'd

A solid range of Nikkor Z lenses is available at different price points
Nikon Z5II, Nikkor Z 85mm f/1.8 S, 1/2500sec at f/1.8, ISO 100

Focal points

Nikon has stuck with a tried-and-tested design and control layout for the Z5II

Where's the LCD?

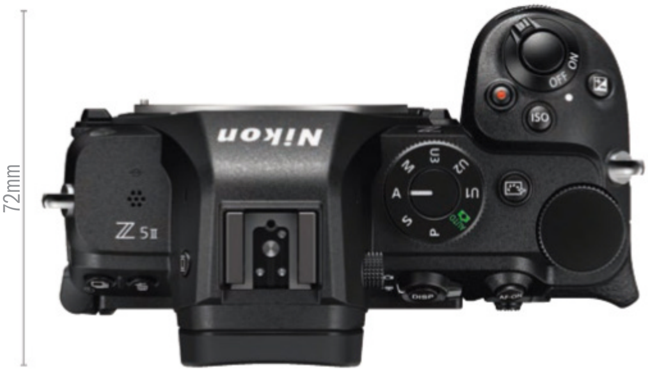
Just like the Z5 before it, there's no top-plate LCD on the Z5II, which is the biggest difference between it and more-expensive Z6 and Z7 models. This simply means you can't quickly check your current settings.

Mode dial

On the top of the Z5II is a mode dial, with all the usual PASM options, as well as a full Auto setting. The new Picture Controls button is found next to it.

User settings

There's also space for three sets of user-defined settings, meaning if you want to group together certain settings, such as for Portrait or Low Light shooting and want quick access to the group, you can do that.



Playback button

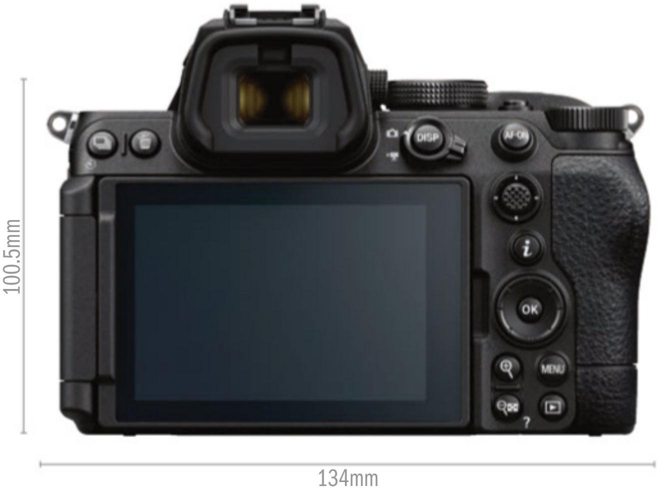
The playback button has moved to the right-hand side of the camera, so it's more easily reached by your thumb. I like to use this when I'm shooting through the viewfinder to check through a couple of shots.

Screen

With a higher resolution, the LCD screen is better in quality than the Z5's. Although they both are touch-sensitive, there's some useful extra functionality here, including the ability to continue using the touchscreen when shooting through the viewfinder to adjust the focus point.

i Button

For quick settings changes, you can press the 'i' button. Here you'll find common options such as white balance, focus type, metering and so on. Again, this can be customised to show different options if you prefer. You can use the joystick, the touchscreen, or the d-pad to move around this menu.



wager that unless you spend a lot of time looking through both viewfinders in quick succession, you won't realise you're missing out.

The brightness has been improved compared with the Z5, now offering 3,000 nits, making it great in brighter conditions. I've found it works very well when working in very sunny conditions.

Autofocus

The single biggest improvement made to the Z5II over the Z5, Z6 and Z6 II relates to autofocus. The new faster processor and subject recognition offers a vastly superior experience when using it for a variety of subjects, making it a very capable all-rounder.

When shooting in AF-S mode and photographing generally static subjects, such as landscapes, interiors, and still life, you can set the focus point manually from 273 across the frame. There are seven focus-area options, ranging from pinpoint for fine subjects (available in photo mode only), to auto-selection across the entire image and subject-tracking AF (video mode only). You can also use things like dynamic-area and wide-area too.

It's these latter focus modes that I use when photographing moving subjects, including wildlife and other even more erratic subjects, such as my toddler or my dog. With older Z series models I barely ever strayed from single-point AF, but as time has gone on and this has improved greatly I find myself relying on – and more importantly – trusting that the camera will get it right. It saves a lot of time (and missed shots) as you can be as responsive to the situation as possible without worrying about the focus point, particularly when shooting at wide apertures.

The new subject recognition does an excellent job. I used it mostly for humans, dogs and birds. The great thing here is that you don't have to change between these individual modes if you don't want to, and can leave the camera on auto subject recognition. Generally I find it does a great job, and I only set it to a specific subject when I knew I would be photographing the same thing for an extended time.

When shooting in AF-C mode, I found that the hit rate was great. It's not as fantastically competent as the likes of professional cameras such as the Z8 or the Z9, but you wouldn't expect it to be. I was pleasantly surprised by how many times it coped well with a bird moving at quite some distance away from the camera. For a camera at this price point, it does a brilliant job, even outshining some more expensive models out there, including the Sony Alpha A7 IV (which can't automatically switch between subjects) and the Panasonic Lumix S5II which doesn't have as many subjects it can recognise.

I also found that the Z5II did well in low light, locking onto a subject fairly quickly most of the time. The -10EV focus acquisition gives you scope to photograph in a range of conditions, again adding to the all-rounder appeal.

Performance

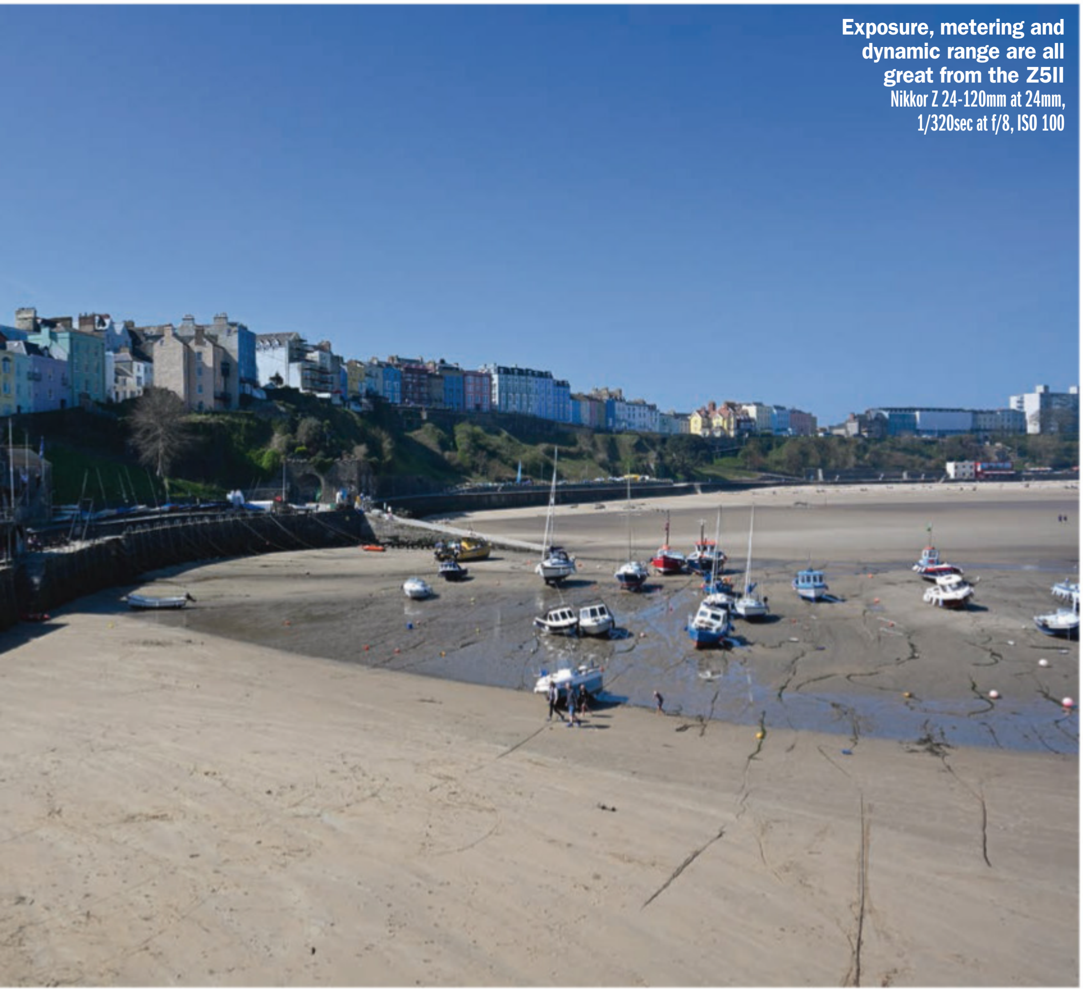
In terms of discreetness, the shutter isn't too loud, but you can also set it to completely silent if you prefer, which can be handy in certain scenarios. You might find that rolling shutter distortion is more of a problem than with partially stacked or fully stacked sensors though, so be sure to check your images as you're shooting if you're in such situations. I haven't found this to be a huge problem, but then again I haven't shot anything super-fast during my time with the Z5II which might make it obvious.

The Z5II uses the EN-EL15-type battery that has been used in a number of Z-series cameras, making it easy to get hold of spares. I found that the battery easily lasted a full day of shooting, but different usages will vary of course. If you're shooting a lot of 4K video for example, a spare can come in handy. You can easily expect the camera to manage upwards of 300 shots when using it 'normally' (single shots, switching the camera off in between shots), but more if you're doing a lot of bursts.

In terms of continuous shooting, having the ability to shoot at full-resolution at up to 14fps (with the mechanical shutter) or 15fps (with the electronic shutter) should mean this suits the needs of most enthusiast wildlife and action photographers. That said, you don't get live view in between frames so you might find keeping up with particularly fast-action is a bit more tricky. Dropping down to 7fps is a more manageable way to approach it, and should still be good enough for many different situations. Remember too that if you do happen to find yourself photographing something incredibly fast, then switching to JPEG only gives you a boost up to 30fps.

One thing that losing the faster CFexpress card slot that the Z6III has means that you won't have such an enormous buffer to play with if you're shooting fast subjects. Again, this is perfectly reasonable for a camera at this price point, and unless you're

Plenty of detail is rendered by the 24MP sensor
Nikon Z5II, Nikkor Z 24-120mm at 66mm, 1/400sec at f/4, ISO 100



Exposure, metering and dynamic range are all great from the Z5II
Nikkor Z 24-120mm at 24mm, 1/320sec at f/8, ISO 100

trying to photograph the entirety of a 200m Olympic sprint race, then it's unlikely to be a problem. Everything I shot in continuous I was able to fire off a few frames, pause to recompose and shoot again with no issue.

The IBIS (in-body image stabilisation) does a good job, with the added 2.5 stops over the predecessor available here. In practice, I've been able to shoot at f/4 at speeds up to around 0.8 seconds and still get nicely sharp images. It helps being able to hold the camera as steady as possible, of course, but on the whole I'm pleased with how my images have come out for general purposes.

Image quality

As it has a sensor which has already proven itself in the Zf, and being generally happy with image quality from the Z5, I had no doubt that the results from the Z5II would be excellent. Happily, I have been proven right.

On the whole, the matrix metering setting gets things pretty much spot on, and I never really find myself touching the exposure compensation dial. In post-processing I may find myself tweaking highlights and shadows a little, but nothing too extreme.

There's a range of different white balance settings you can use. Most of the time I tend to leave it on Auto and find that it does a reasonable job of recreating colours accurately. There's also a useful Natural Light Auto setting which is good if you're shooting outdoors. But being prone to forget about settings, Auto is a good way to ensure it gets it overall right most of the time. Of course, you can adjust or tweak white balance when shooting in raw anyway.

Like the Zf and the Z6III, the Z5III has a 24MP sensor. I find this to be more than enough pixels for most ordinary uses. There will be some out there who crave higher-resolution cameras, which is fine of course, but I think this is a good balance between size, price and performance. The dynamic range appears to be very good, again, in line with the Zf's sensor, additionally meaning you can make quite extreme adjustments in post-processing should you need to.

In low light, the mid-range ISOs do a great job of producing clean images. For most scenarios, I'd be happy to leave ISO in the Auto mode, but capped at about ISO 6400. In some situations, I'd be happy to go up to 12,800 before I started worrying too much about problematic noise creeping in, too. I've even got some nice shots at ISO 32,000 too, but there is some evidence of smoothing recorded which might be a bit obvious at larger printing sizes (but less bothersome at smaller sizes and for social sharing etc).

Verdict

Amateur Photographer
Testbench
GOLD
★★★★★
Nikon

I WASN'T expecting to like the Z5II as much as I have done. For the price, you get an extremely capable full-frame camera that delivers well across a wide variety of different situations. Whether you're a beginner, new to full frame, or someone who just wants a good, solid, capable camera without necessarily needing super-high-powered functionality, this is a winner.

There's not much I don't like about this camera. About the only thing I can pick out is that there's no top-plate LCD, but I don't use that often enough to warrant spending extra on the next model up. Of course, there are other things that make higher-priced Nikon cameras better – it would be foolish to say otherwise – but I don't think there's much better out there in terms of the balance between price and performance, either from Nikon or otherwise.

I've loved using it as a family camera to document the everyday life of my daughter. But it's also performed well for other subjects such as birds, as well as being generally good for easier subjects such as landscapes. If you're looking for something which delivers well in a wide range of areas, but don't have an extravagant amount to spend on a camera, this is about as good as you're going to get brand new.

FEATURES	8/10
BUILD & HANDLING	8/10
METERING	9/10
AUTOFOCUS	9/10
AWB & COLOUR	8/10
DYNAMIC RANGE	9/10
IMAGE QUALITY	9/10
VIEWFINDER/LCD	8/10

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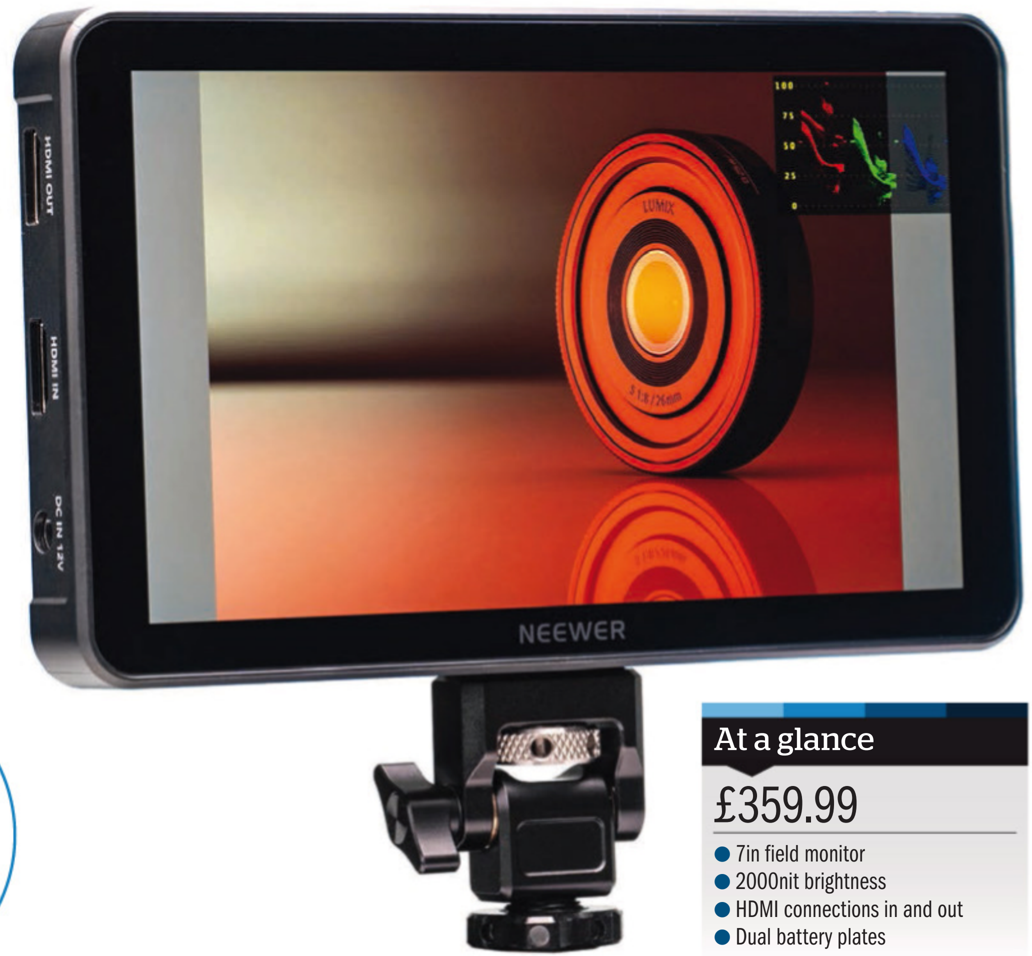
Power options
The F700 can be powered by one or two NP-F type batteries, via the mains or from an external powerbank/V-Lock battery.

LUTS loaded
11 LUTs for common camera brands are pre-loaded but we can add up to 49 of our own.

Control points
Users have control via a series of physical buttons on the top of the device as well as via the monitor's touchscreen.



At a glance

£359.99

- 7in field monitor
- 2000nit brightness
- HDMI connections in and out
- Dual battery plates
- Kit includes battery and mount
- uk.neewer.com

Neewer F700

Large, bright screens like the Neewer F700 can make life a lot easier for tripod-based photographers. But this 2000nit, 7in field monitor seems suspiciously good value for money, says **Damien Demolder**

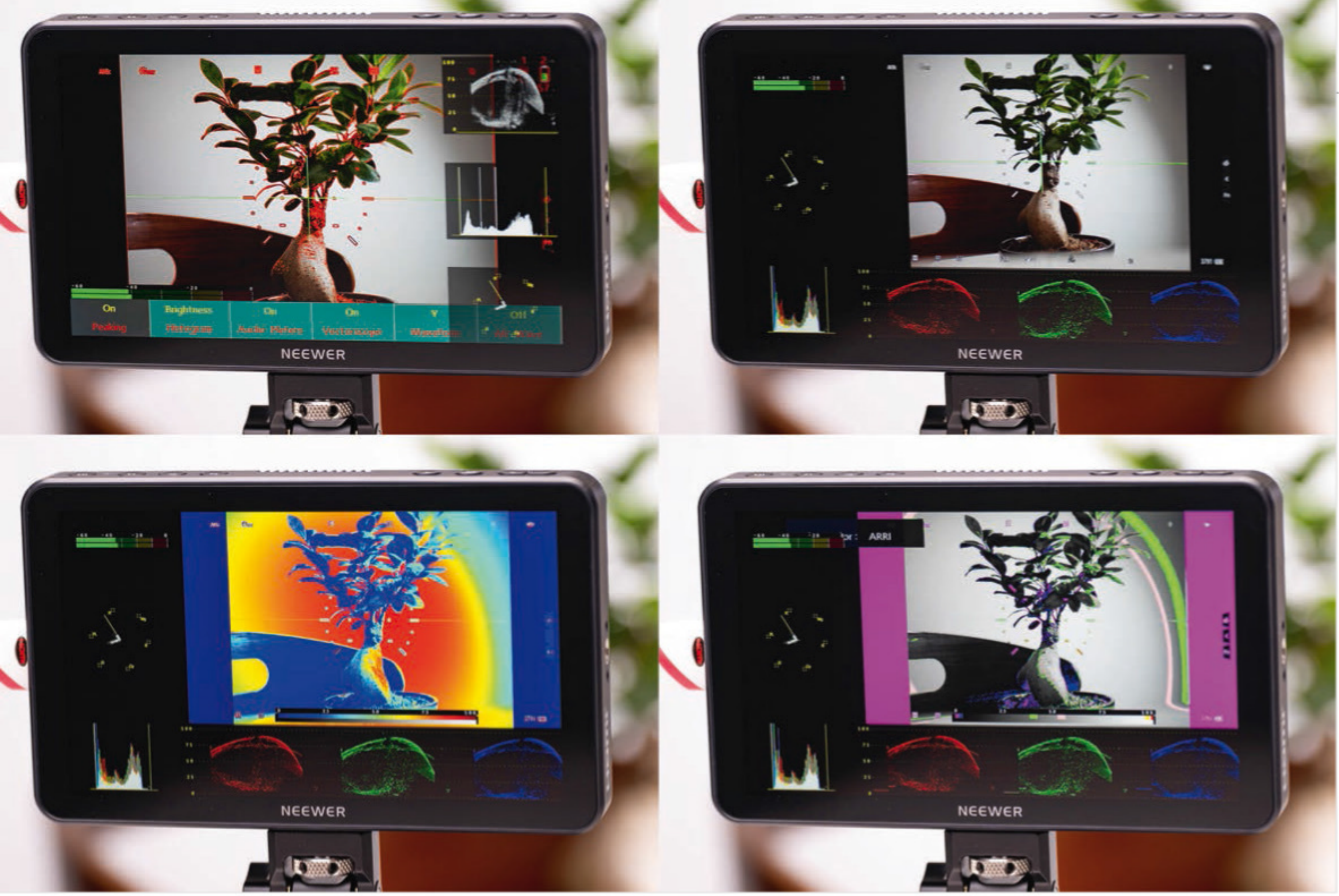
For some reason, many stills photographers have considered the external monitor the sole preserve of the videographer. They have been quite bulky of course, as well as expensive, and attaching one to your hotshoe doesn't make your camera more easily hand-holdable. However, for tripod workers an external monitor several times larger than the screen of the camera can be a massive boon, especially for landscapers, macro shooters, still-lifers and architecturalists. Having a larger monitor to the side of the camera allows us firstly to get a better sense of our composition, but to also see more detail in the scene we are recording. Additional features in these monitors, such as focus peaking, can also help ensure the bits we want to be sharp actually are, and that the depth-of-field provided by the set aperture is sufficient for our purposes.

This new monitor from Neewer isn't expensive, isn't heavy and is bright enough to see clearly when shooting outside. With a 7in screen, it offers a relatively enormous view of what your camera is seeing. But low-cost, large screen and a bright view don't usually apply all at once. So what's the catch?

Features

The Neewer F700 is a field monitor that features a 1920x1080 7in touchscreen display with a maximum brightness of 2000nits. This 2000nit element of the specification is pretty significant as it puts this monitor on a level with some of the best and well-known rivals – and well ahead of many others. It also means it should be clearly viewable outside on a bright sunny day. For comparison an Apple 10th-generation iPad is 500nits, while an Atomos Shinobi 7 is also 2000nits.

The display has a contrast ratio of 1000:1, a viewing angle of 160° and can display HDR images. We connect our



An array of different display modes and visualisation tools aid with judging focus and exposure, including peaking and false colour

cameras via an HDMI cable to the HDMI-In port, and can also use a second HDMI cable in the HDMI-Out port to send a 4K signal out the other side. This is called HDMI Loop-Through, and allows us to send the image to a second monitor or to a video recorder at the same time.

A pair of battery plates on the rear of the device let us mount two Sony NP-F-type batteries at the same time, so the monitor doesn't need to switch off when one battery dies. We can also run power from the wall, or to the USB-C port from a powerbank or V-Lock battery. A power-out port on the bottom of the unit also allows us to power other devices from the same power source, so with a 2.5mm-to-USB-C cable we can run our camera from the same source that's powering the monitor, and videographers can power follow-focus or wireless video transmitter devices directly from the monitor too.

An SD card slot on the base of the Neewer F700 allows us to update firmware as well as to load LUTs to the monitor's own storage. There are 11 LUTs built-in that mostly convert camera log profiles to Rec709 but the custom library gives us space to load up to 49 of our own for more fancy looks and applications.

Two mounting points mean we can have the monitor in the landscape or portrait orientation, and a 3.5mm phono-socket delivers the means to check audio levels via earphones.

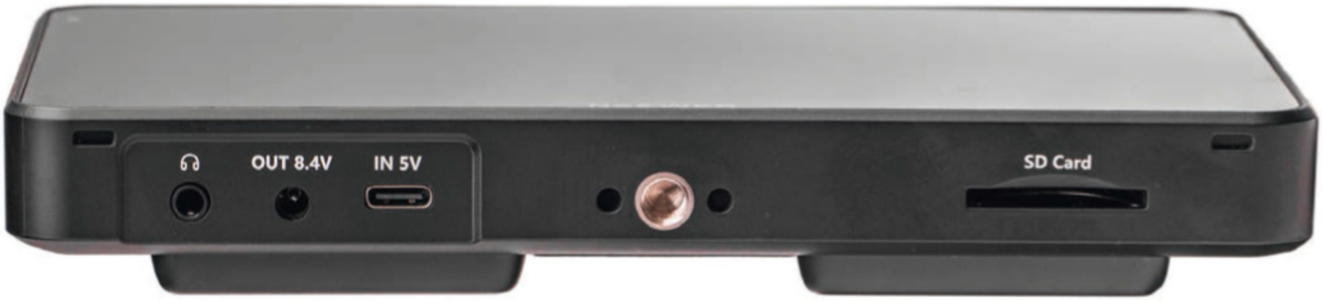
I got the kit that includes a NP-F750 battery, as it would have been madness to get the kit without it – opting for the battery adds only £10 to the price! With or without the battery (or two) the monitor also comes with an angled cold-shoe mount that features a light stand-sized thread in the base – so the F700 can easily switch between the camera and a stand.

The whole monitor measures 175x107x25mm and weighs 375g without the battery.

In use

Probably the first thing you'll notice about the Neewer F700 when you switch it on is that it is bright. It's bright, clear and the picture looks very nice straight out of the box, and if you happen to be outside when you take it out of the box you'll be pleased with how easy it is to see even in very bright conditions. This on its own probably makes it worth the price.

The viewing angle is also excellent. Neewer says that we



On the base you'll find headphone, DC out, and USB-C power ports, plus an SD card slot for updating the firmware and loading LUTs

F1
F2
F3
SET
NEEWER

HDMI OUT
HDMI IN
DC IN 12V

Buttons on top control display functions, with the camera connecting to an HDMI port on the side

should be able to see the picture clearly from a range of 160° but there's no real shift in colour, contrast or brightness even as the front of the panel is viewed almost side-on. It's very good and means that two people looking at the image at the same time will have exactly the same experience.

The touch function is nicely responsive, and even though the menu system isn't very pretty, it is straightforward and simple enough to navigate – and crucially, easy to see and read. There's a physical menu button on the top of the unit that opens the main viewing assistance features such as peaking, histogram, audio meters and wave form, and we get an 'all meters' view that shows a collection of metrics at the same time. We have left/right buttons for navigation, but in most cases it's easier just to touch the screen to make our selections. Three customisable buttons will give us a short cut to whichever display modes we choose to allocate to them, we have a 'back' button and the on/off button just does its job without leaving us guessing. All the usual display modes are available including anamorphic desqueeze, a collection of aspect ratios, false colour offerings, grid lines, zoom and the ability to flip the view should you need to hang the screen upside down. There's nothing missing, and when you switch the monitor on it comes to life pretty quickly. I'm pleased too with the build quality – it feels well-made and as though it will last a long time.

As I said, the interface isn't very attractive. It does its job well enough, though some better-looking graphics and more appealing visuals would elevate the experience of using the monitor a great deal. This monitor doesn't cost very much but it doesn't feel like a cheap monitor and it doesn't perform like a cheap monitor – the graphics though make the interface feel a bit basic. It doesn't really matter in practical terms as everything is easy to find and quick to adjust, it could just look a bit nicer which would make it feel more sophisticated.

I've saved some of my word-count in this review specifically to tell you about the mount that comes with the Neewer F700 and which is designed to help us attach it to the camera or a light stand. It's really very good! I have a lot of this kind of mount and many of them make life frustrating, either by not being strong enough to hold the intended cargo, by making it hard to tighten the hinge sufficiently or by demanding tools to adjust the angle at which the monitor sits. Someone at Neewer is clearly a genius and has come up with a mount that is easy to lock into the hotshoe of the camera and easy to remove, which tightens easily to the base of the monitor and won't rotate, and which is easy to open so the angle of the monitor can be altered. On its own it retails for £35 and is worth every penny – but it comes free with the F700. Most monitors don't come with a mount at all.

NEEWER
NP-F
NP-F

There are two slots on the back for NP-F type batteries

Verdict

THE NEEWER F700 is a pretty exceptional monitor. Not only does it have a large display but it also has a very bright display that is clear and easy to see from all angles. It doesn't add a massive amount of weight to your set-up, it has a host of powering options that mean it never has to turn off, it can power your camera and accessories, and it comes with one of the best, if not the best, mounts in the business. The menu could look nicer, but it is easy to navigate and contains every option anyone could expect or want. And it costs only £360 – about £200 less than the Atomos Shinobi 7 that does much the same thing.

Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended ★★★★½

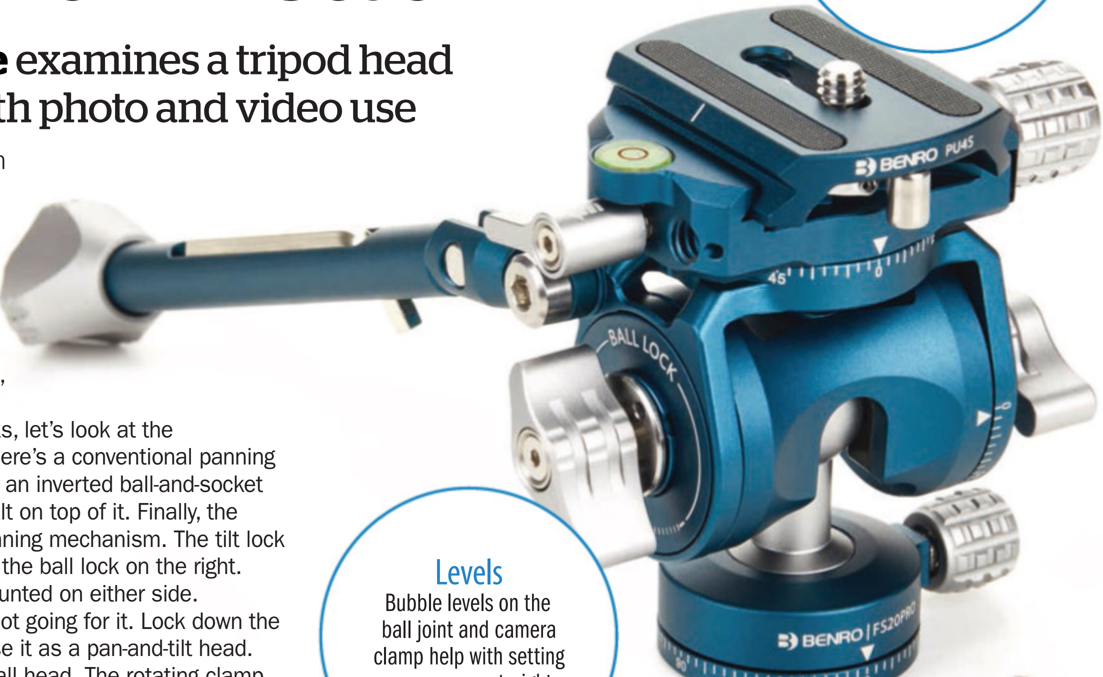
For and against

- + Very bright
- + Great colour and contrast
- + Large display area
- + Not heavy
- + Nice touch sensitivity
- + Fully featured
- − Interface could look nicer

Benro FS20PRO Hybrid Head

Andy Westlake examines a tripod head designed for both photo and video use

● £100 ● uk.benroeu.com



Most tripod heads fall into one of two camps, either ball-and-socket heads for photography, or pan-and-tilt heads for video. The Benro FS20PRO Hybrid Head aims to give the best of both worlds, by combining the two types.

To understand how this works, let's look at the construction. At the bottom, there's a conventional panning base with its own lock. Next is an inverted ball-and-socket joint, with a tilt mechanism built on top of it. Finally, the camera clamp has its own panning mechanism. The tilt lock is placed on the left side, with the ball lock on the right. A short pan handle can be mounted on either side.

On paper, this design has a lot going for it. Lock down the ball, and videographers can use it as a pan-and-tilt head. Lock the tilt, and you have a ball head. The rotating clamp will equally happily hold either cameras with L-brackets, or telephoto lenses with tripod feet, by spinning it through 90°.

I've been pleasantly surprised by how well the head works in practice. I tested it with a Sony A7R V and Sigma 100-400mm lens together weighing 2kg, and I was impressed to find that it held this just fine, locking down with minimal shift in composition. However, all those controls do make it slightly complicated to use. For example, it's easy to mix up the ball and tilt locks, and it's a shame they don't have more distinct designs.

For video, both the pan and tilt movements are fairly smooth, although there's no adjustment for drag. You can even use the ball head like a levelling bowl, and attach the handle to the camera clamp for panning. However, it's nowhere near as smooth.

Perhaps the head's biggest weakness comes in ball mode. There's a single slot for dropping the camera 90° into portrait format, but otherwise tilt angles are rather small. You can get around this by using the tilt and camera-clamp panning mechanisms, but it's slower than a conventional ball head. You do get a degree of friction control, though, by progressively releasing the ball lock.

Verdict

I wasn't expecting very much from the Benro FS20PRO, given its small size, complexity, and relatively low price. But it's better than it has any right to be. It does bring some compromises; it's neither as quick to use as a ball head, nor as smooth as a proper video head. But if you just want one small, lightweight head for both photo and video, it does the job surprisingly well.

ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE STREET PRICES

Arca-Swiss

The camera clamp will accept any standard 38mm dovetail camera plate or L-bracket.

Levels

Bubble levels on the ball joint and camera clamp help with setting your camera straight and level.

Markings

The panning base, rotating camera clamp and tilt mechanism are all marked at 5° increments.

Pan handle

The handle can be fixed either to the camera platform or to either side of the tilt mechanism, and folds down for storage.

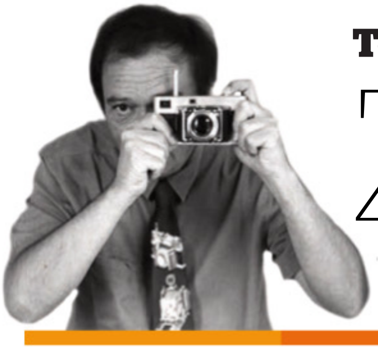
Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended ★★★★½

At a glance

- Hybrid ball-and-socket/ pan-and-tilt head
- Dual panning (camera clamp and base)
- Arca-Swiss camera clamp
- 8.2x7.8x5cm; 310g
- 4.5kg rated load

CYANBIRD KIT

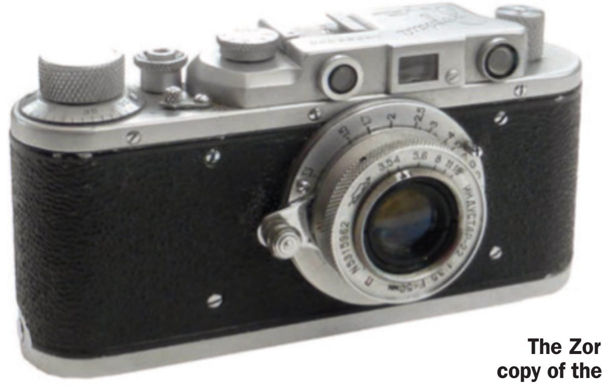
With its metallic blue finish, the Benro FS20PRO is designed to match the firm's lightweight Cyanbird tripods. As well as being available standalone, it comes in a kit with a carbon-fibre version of the tripod for £315. If you have the original hybrid model with the N00P ball-head, it might make a nice upgrade.



Tony Kemplen on the ...

Zorki 1

An 'Eastern Bloc' 35mm rangefinder camera acquired from eBay for £30 in 2014



The Zorki 1 is a copy of the Leica II

Not so long ago I wrote about the Leica IIf, and at first glance you could be forgiven for thinking that I'm repeating myself, as this camera looks remarkably similar. What we have here is a Soviet-era copy of a Leica II. It's an illustration of the way in which the Second World War and its aftermath shaped the camera market in the 1950s and beyond.

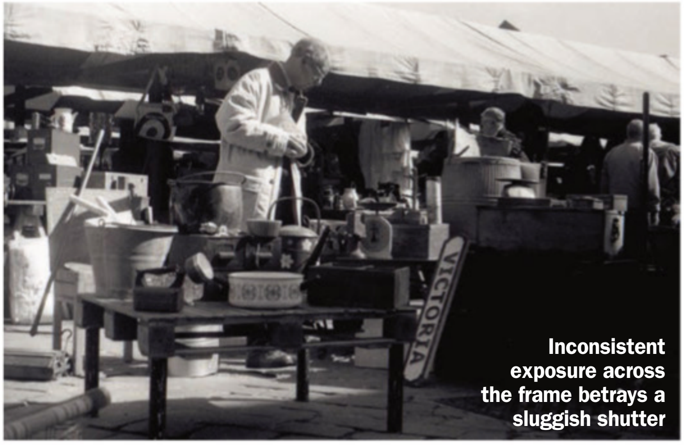
When post-war Europe was divided into East and West, camera parts and even whole assembly lines were moved to the USSR and the DDR, where production continued and evolved. These Eastern Bloc cameras were a mainstay of photographers on a budget. My school photographic society used them, and in addition to the ubiquitous Zenit SLR, we had a Zorki 4, which was still recognisably a Leica derivative.

My Zorki 1 came from eBay in 2014, and I paid £30 for it, complete with the original leather case. Checking recent sales shows that specimens in working order generally sell for around the £100 mark today. The lens is the 50mm f/3.5 Industar 22, a Tessar-type design, not dissimilar to the Leitz Elmar which graced Leicas of this vintage. Not surprisingly, the Zorki's specs match those of the Leica II.

It is almost inevitable that a focal-plane shutter that hasn't been used regularly, or serviced appropriately, will become unreliable. Common problems include inconsistent rates of travel of the cloth blinds, failure or delayed transit of the second curtain, and pinholes appearing in the rubberised cloth as it ages. You can get a fairly good idea as to how a shutter is going to work simply by observing it, but until the actual negative is hanging up to dry, slightly sluggish blinds might not be apparent. The slower speeds tend to fail first, and I found the only speed at which mine fired properly was the fastest, 1/200sec.

Loading film into these Leicas and Zorkis is a tricky procedure. Whereas most 35mm cameras have a hinged or removable back, these have a removable bottom plate instead. This means you are loading the film blind, and in my experience, strict concentration and having the relevant page of the manual open are needed to avoid frustration or damage to the film or camera.

Street photography is not a genre I feel comfortable with, but I gave it a shot at the weekly flea market in Chesterfield, which has been a source of a number of cameras and accessories over the years. Even after I've applied some gentle correction post scanning, you can make out that the left-hand side of this frame is overexposed compared to the right. So despite appearing to work properly, there was indeed some sluggishness in the shutter's action.



Inconsistent exposure across the frame betrays a sluggish shutter

See more of Tony's photos on **Instagram @tonykemplen** or at **flickr.com/tony_kemplen**

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APOY Inspiration

If you plan to enter our **Close-ups and Details** round, which launches next week, take these tips from three of last year's top ten photographers

Chris Patterson, UK

Nikon D5600, 105mm, 1/13sec at f/11, ISO 100

Chris was awarded eighth place in last year's Macro category, with his imaginative and witty setup catching everyone's eye. The judges said: 'Chris has made the humble banana appear like a challenging rock face. The detail of the palm trees behind are a great touch, too, and avoid what might have been too plain a background.'

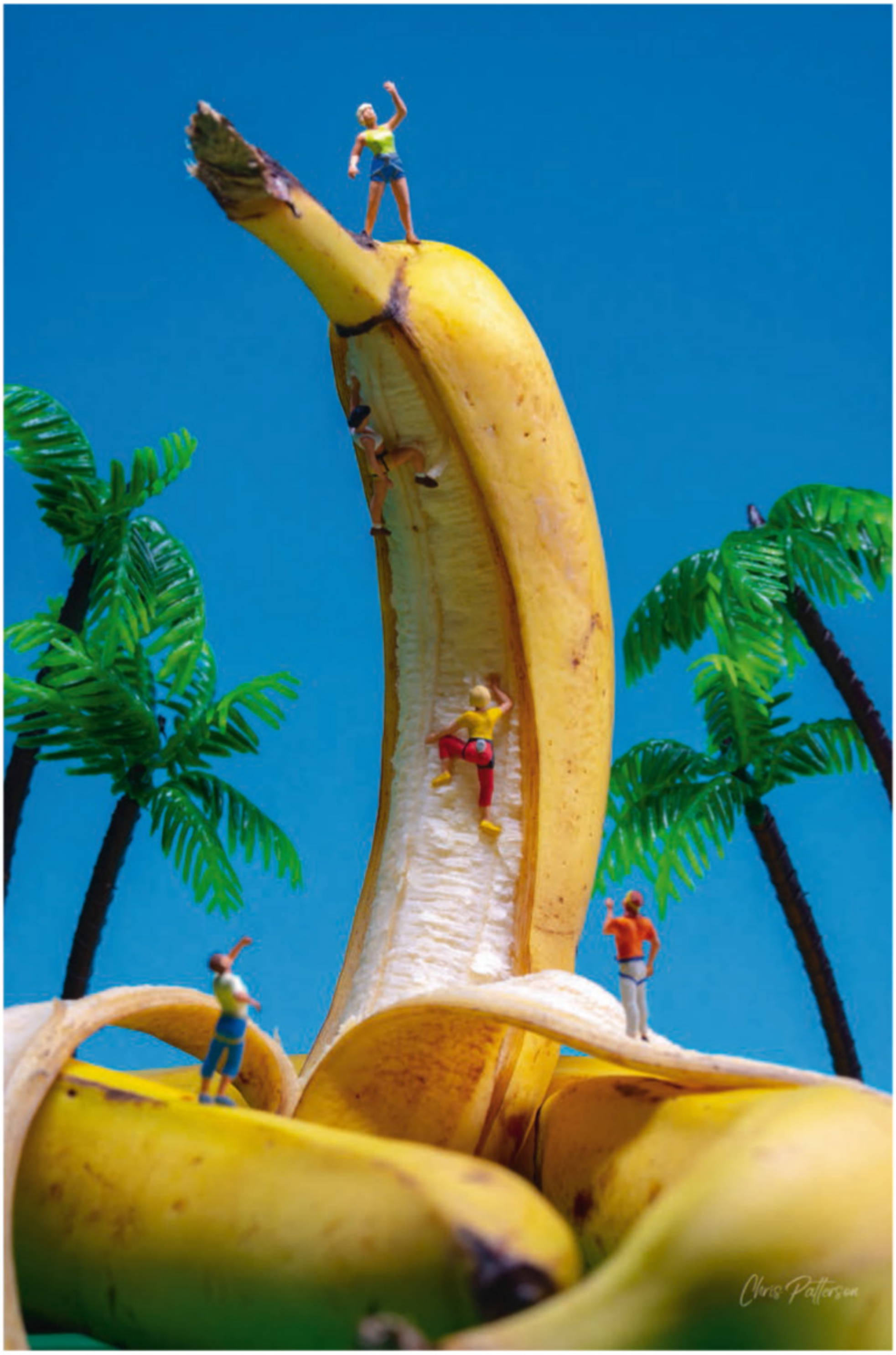
Chris says: 'As with most of my images, I either source figures and sketch up ideas from there or see an object and think about how I can arrange it to make an interesting scene. In this case, I had some mountain climbers and was working my way through various fruits and vegetables for a series of images. The idea of using the banana upright semi-peeled as a rock face came naturally as I sketched up a few scenes.

The shot was set up using a tripod to steady my Nikon D5600 and Sigma 105mm Macro lens.

My home setup isn't anything fancy or expensive and can be mimicked by any aspiring photographer. With camera gear being pricey enough as it is, you don't need to spend money on an expensive studio. All you need is some desk space, a light source, objects and your imagination, oh and your camera of course!

My setup for this scene consisted of two sheets of coloured cardboard and a sheet of foam board to add structure to the background, and finally an adjustable desk lamp that I could alter the brightness and warmth of light on.

I started by positioning the bananas, climbers and finally the palm trees to add a bit of contrast and texture to the scene. I then shot the scene from a variety of angles, heights and f-stops. The key to most of my macro photography is a remote shutter release: it allows me to avoid touching the camera, eliminating any shake affecting the quality and focus of the final image.'



Angi Wallace, UK

OM Digital Solutions OM-1, 90mm, 1/125sec at f/18, ISO 200

Angi won last year's Macro round with her outstanding and creative still of submerged flowers, titled 'Re Ink Carnation'. Guest judge Tracy Calder said: 'Everything here is perfect. A shutter speed of 1/125sec has allowed the perfect amount of motion in the liquid, so it appears to be pouring from the petals. The caption links carnations to Greek legend, which adds a great bit of storytelling too.'

Angi says: 'I photograph flowers submerged in liquids with back stories that I try to put across using colours and different techniques to depict their 'personalities'. The carnations were submerged in water, with milk and beetroot juice then ink drizzled in.

Carnations are known as the flowers of the gods and are associated with devotion, fascination, distinction and love. They are linked in mythology to the goddess Diana, who fell in love with a shepherd who did not reciprocate her feelings. Spurned, she became enraged and plucked his eyes out, discarding his body on the ground and carnations sprouted from his remains.

Red carnations generally represent affections, while white symbolise love and purity. In Victorian times, carnations were used to send secret admirers messages. A solid colour would indicate a positive response, a striped one suggesting a maybe and a yellow one stood for a no. So, to reflect the flowers' historical and folklore links, I chose red, white and pink ink for this set of images to symbolise what these flowers stand for: white for purity, divinity and good luck, red for affection and love, pink for unconditional love and purple for devotion in some cultures.'

Jay Birmingham, UK

Canon EOS R5, 180mm, 1/8000sec at f/2.8, ISO 50

Jay's beautifully delicate study, entitled 'Demoiselles at Dawn', took seventh place in 2024's round. The judges said: 'The silhouette picks out their delicate wings beautifully and the f/2.8 aperture is perfect for rendering the sun as an out-of-focus orb.'

Jay says: 'I do most of my macro photography at sunrise, when conditions are often calm and the light is soft. On this morning, the forecast promised still weather, so I set my alarm for 4am and headed out to my local site. Early mornings are ideal for macro: there's little wind to disturb delicate subjects, and insects are often still roosting, making them easier to photograph.

I soon found a number of banded demoiselles settled in the grasses, including these two that were perfectly positioned on a single leaf. As the sun began to rise, I composed the image so that the demoiselles were silhouetted against the low, glowing orb of the sun. I used a wide aperture (f/2.8) on my Sigma 180mm macro lens to ensure the sun appeared large and soft behind them, creating a strong visual impact.

Because I wanted to maintain that shallow depth of field while still keeping both insects sharp, I focus bracketed the shot using my Canon R5 on a tripod. I took several images at slightly different focus points and later stacked them using Helicon Focus. The result preserves the delicate detail of the demoiselles while retaining the dreamy, ethereal quality of the sunrise.'

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Be a social club

The letter of the week from Martin Eaglestone (*Inbox* 3 June) asks about the social side of camera clubs and photographic societies. In Stirling and District Camera Club, which has been in existence since before 1900, the social side is alive and kicking.

With more than 70 members, we meet weekly, between September and April, in the function suite of a local restaurant/pub. That is fairly expensive, since it costs us £70 per meeting, but the price does include coffees, teas and chocolate biscuits. The bar is, of course, open for those members who wish to partake of something stronger.

In addition, we have fortnightly Sunday coffee mornings in a local café throughout the year and, in the summer season, we organise a number of club outings that occasionally involve overnight stays in hotels, camper-vans or even hillwalkers' bothies.

I suspect that it is the active social side of the club that leads to us having a more equal gender balance and, perhaps, a younger age profile than many other similar clubs.

Eric Begbie

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Missing the point

Regarding your test of the Sony 400-800mm, I think the reviewer is missing the point of why people would buy this lens; the desire for greater reach. I traded in my 200-600mm lens for the 400-800mm because, as a wildlife photographer, I rarely used anything under 400mm and the extra reach (whilst never enough!) was most welcome. I doubt anyone buying this lens will be troubled by a lower limit of 400mm. Yes, it's big and heavy but all lenses of this type are. I use a chest harness which allows me to carry the camera vertically, and means I can walk about without a heavy weight around my neck.

I have been using it for a few months and the results (even in low light) are very good.The main limitation is my ability to focus quickly enough before the bird has flown off! For those of us who can only dream of owning a prime lens, I think the 400-800mm is a great affordable option.

Jeremy Morris

Technical Editor Andy Westlake replies: I think your point is valid for wildlife, when you can never have too much reach. But that's not the only possible use for this lens, and I found the 400mm short end genuinely limiting when shooting motorsports.

AP tested Sony's FE 400-800mm F6.3-8 G OSS, the longest E-mount lens available

Go manual

A dealer recently told me that the 500mm and 800mm Nikon lenses have had problems. One 800mm lens had to be replaced after the third time of being returned for repair. The 500mm lenses haven't fared much better.

By their very nature modern AF lenses need to be lightweight in order to autofocus at a fast speed and so they get very rattly after a year or two.

I've owned several manual Nikon telephoto lenses: the 300mm f/2.8; a 400mm f/3.5; 600mm f/4.5 and 800mm f/5.6. These all have super-smooth manual focusing, can follow mammals such as deer etc and birds in flight, without the annoying hunting of the AF lenses. The build quality is so good they last for decades. The AF telephotos will be lucky to last a decade, and probably less. Nikon itself did not change to AF tele lenses until well into the DSLR era.

If you want a long lens that will precisely follow focus without hunting, with super sharpness, at a more affordable price, they can be found at used camera retailers and on auction sites. I recently bought a 400mm f/3.5 for £200. I also own a 500mm AF lens which I hardly ever use.

Gary Merritt

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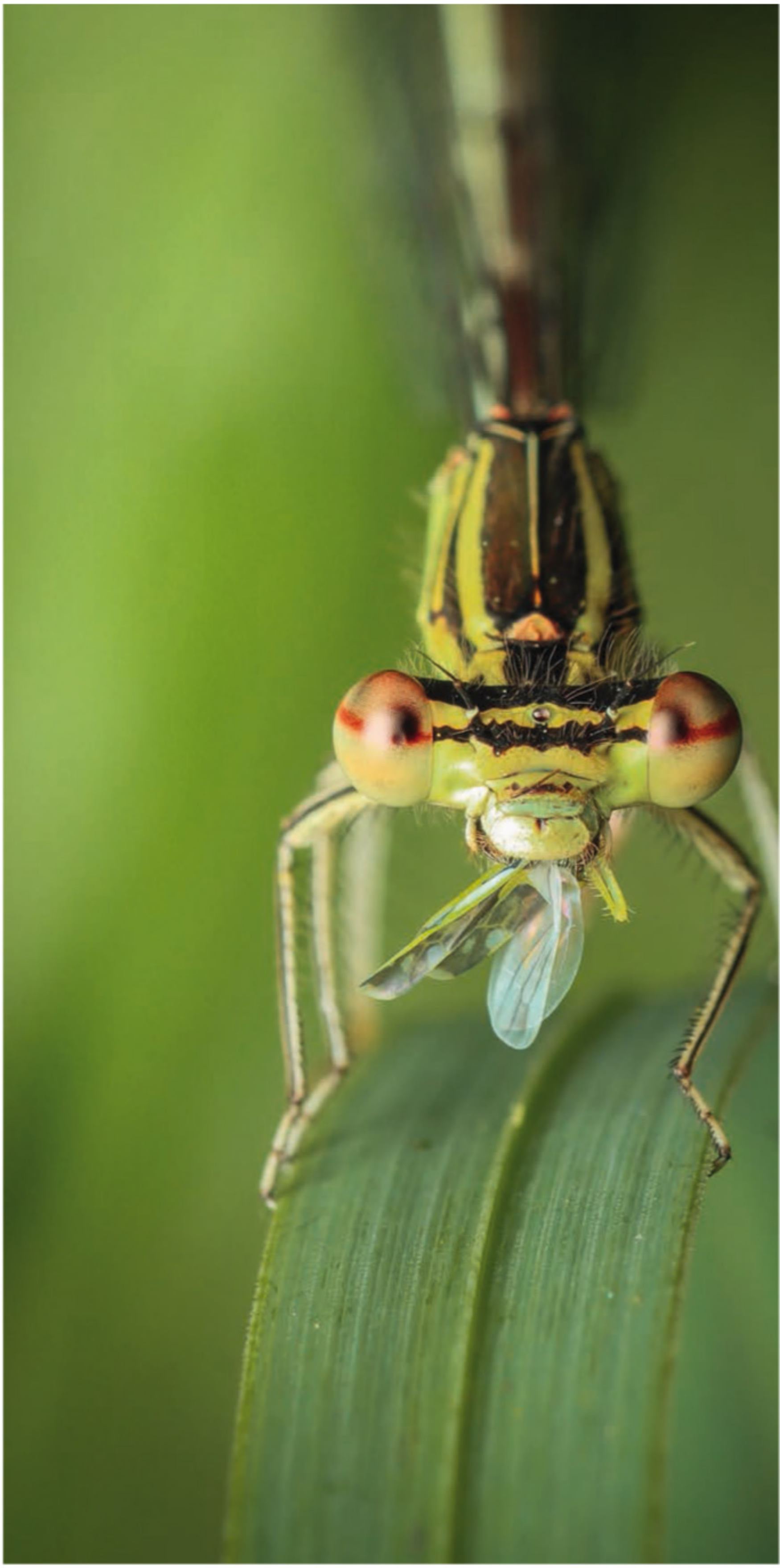
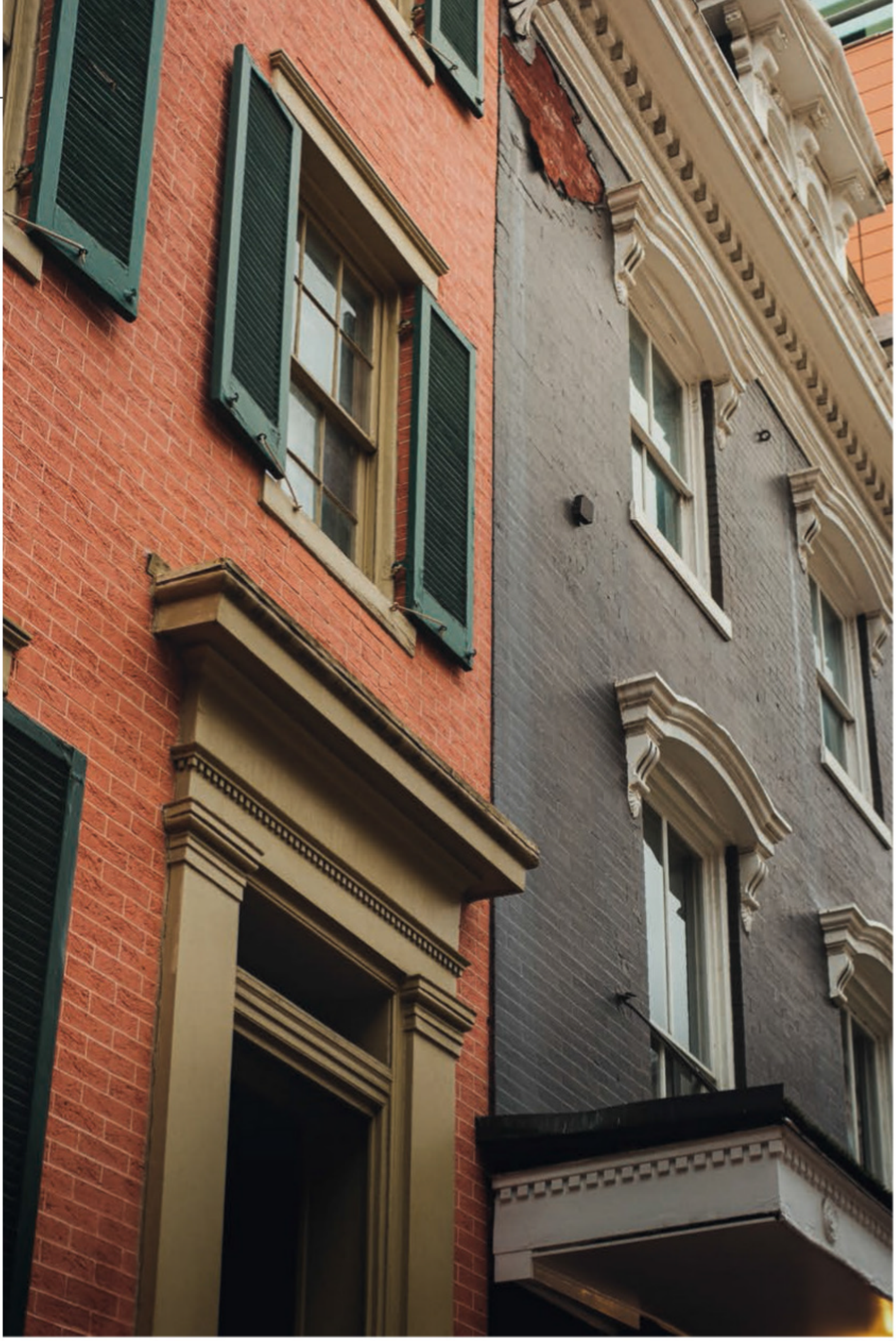
Damselfly's Lunch Break
by Adam Jones

Canon EOS 90D, Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 Macro IS USM lens (with Godox V860III flash, and AK Macro Diffuser), 1/250sec at f/10, ISO 100

'I find the unseen character of tiny creatures to be endlessly fascinating. Insects are cold-blooded, so can be quite animated in the sunshine; however, this female white-legged damselfly (Platycnemis Pennipes) stayed still and was very tolerant of me getting close and taking her picture, seemingly engrossed by her lunch!'
Instagram: @prettyflymacrophotography





A House Divided

by Braeden Ayub

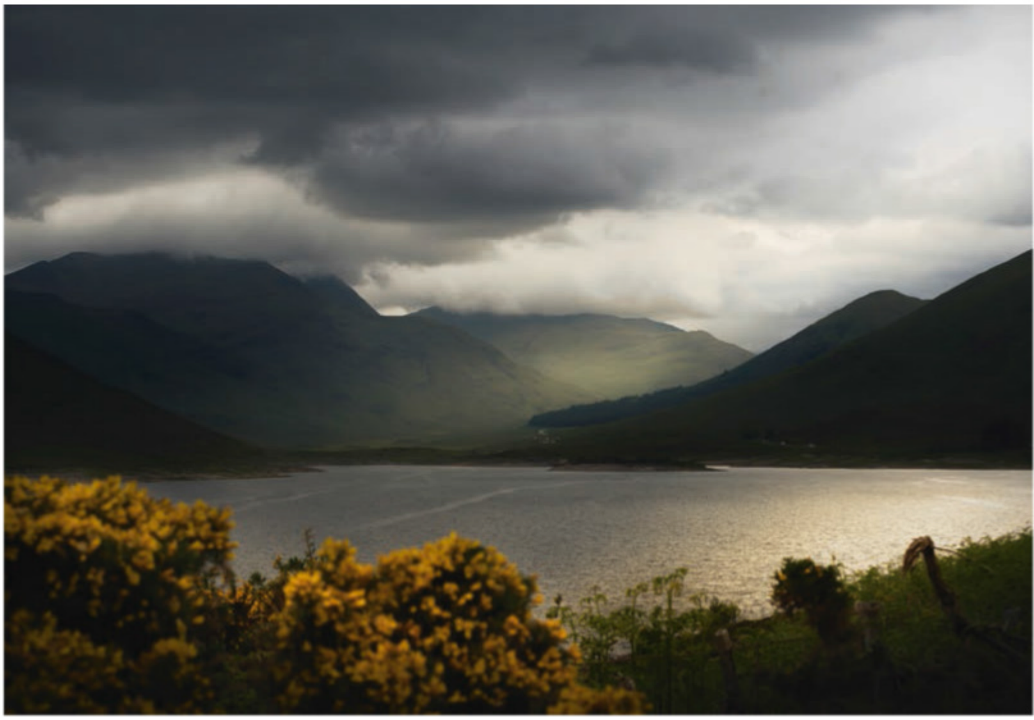
Fujifilm X-T5, Fujifilm XF 35mm F2, 1/250sec at f/8, ISO 125

‘The exterior of a building in Washington, DC, USA. I thoroughly enjoyed the contrasting styles, despite being (or appearing to be) structurally dependent of each other.’

Instagram: @snapsbybraeden

Website: www.braedenayubphotography.com

It's good to share



Yellow Tempest
by Gloria Putman

Nikon Z6, Nikkor Z lens at 62mm, 1/250sec at f/16, ISO 200

'It was a stormy afternoon in May of 2024 when a sweet scent of gorse hit me all of a sudden. It must have been the winds picking up that carried that intoxicating smell; I followed it until I came to this glorious view of Loch Ness.'
Instagram: @apronandsuitcase_travel
Website: apronandsuitcase.com

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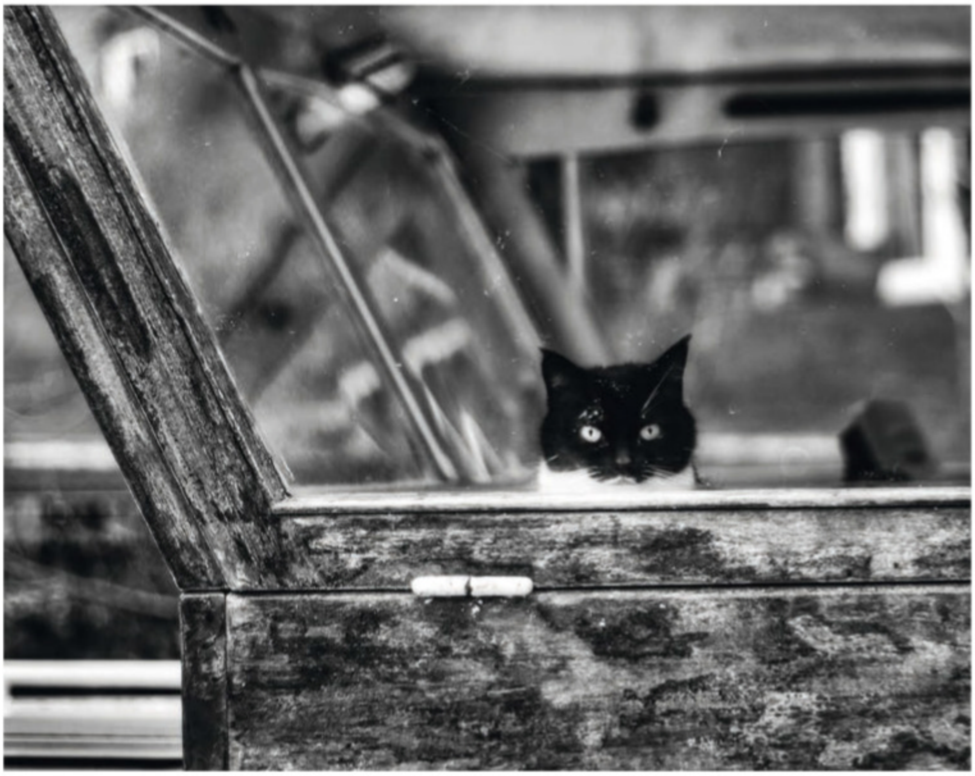

Perrfect Peek
by Joe Aggio

Canon EOS M6 Mark II, Canon EF 50mm F1.8

'This was taken as I was walking along the Hertford canal of the River Lea where canal boats moor up.'
Instagram: @imstillhere_photography

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Reader Portfolio

Spotlight on readers' excellent images and how they captured them

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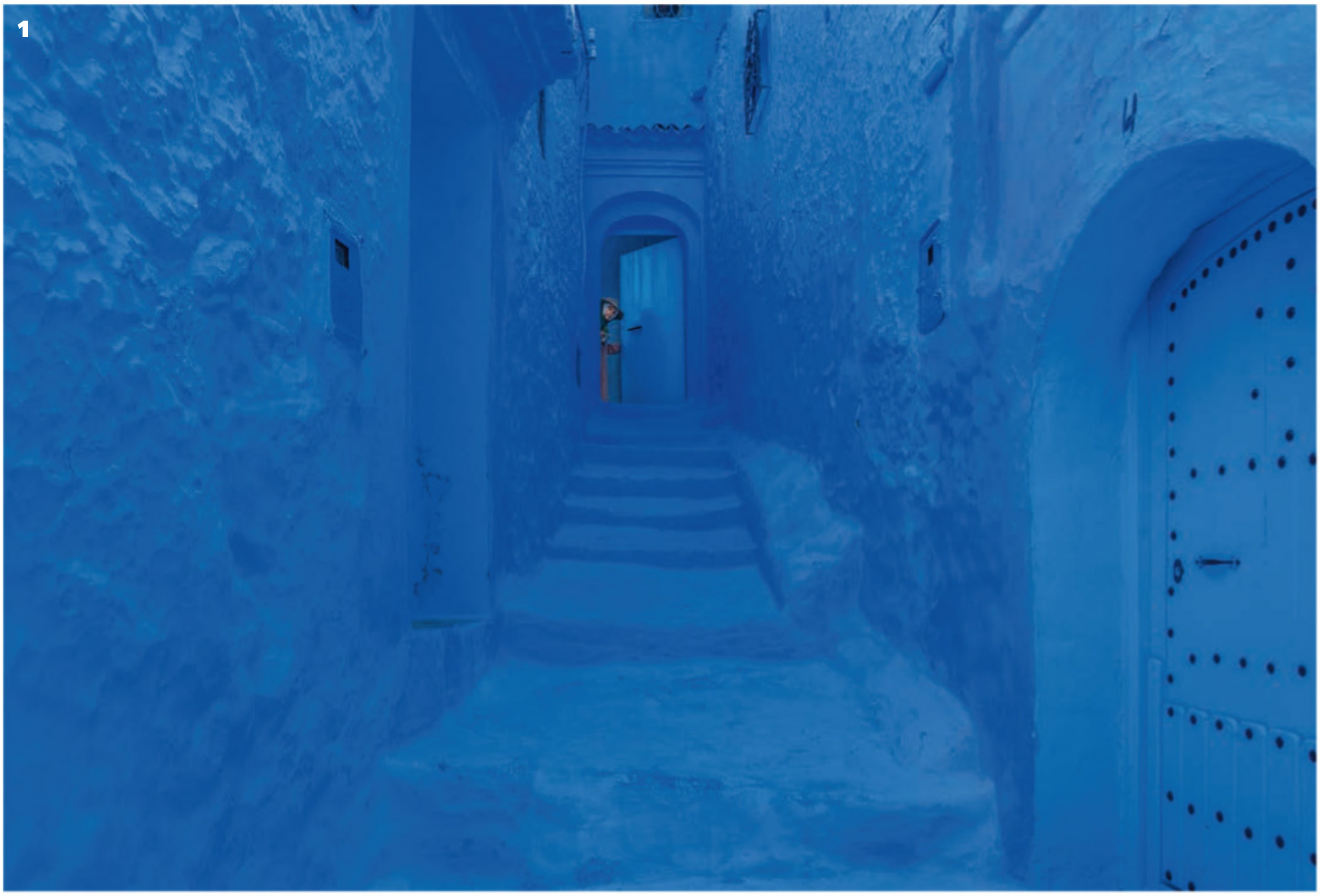

Kelly Beckta, Ontario, Canada

About Kelly
Kelly is a member of SheClicks, Sony Alpha Female, and Women Street Photographers. See more of her work at Instagram/ kellybeckta.jpg and kellybeckta.com

How did you get into photography?
From the moment I picked up a camera as a child, photography became the lens through which I see the world. I've always felt like everything around me could be captured in a frame – moments, colours, emotions – all waiting to be preserved. There's a certain magic in freezing time, holding onto a piece of the world that will never be the same again. Growing up, I was always drawn to old photographs, mesmerised by the stories they told, the memories they held; that fascination turned into a lifelong passion for photography.

What do you love about photography?
I've always had a restless spirit, an insatiable desire to explore. For me, photography is about diving deep into unfamiliar worlds, seeking understanding, and discovering the untold stories that live in every corner. There's a thrill in stepping into the unknown, in capturing the essence of a place and its people with a camera. There's nothing more exhilarating than immersing myself in a new place, uncovering its hidden stories and secrets while blissfully clicking away.

Favourite subjects
I'm drawn to capturing the rich tapestry of travel, the vibrant colours, street scenes, and the people who bring life to these moments. What I love most is photographing daily life in faraway places. Street photography fascinates me because it tells real, unscripted human stories – it's unpredictable and full of character.

Where do you find inspiration?
Inspiration comes to me when I'm out wandering. I'm constantly on the lookout for great light, unexpected moments, and I trust in my intuitive sense of direction. It's about being open to surprises and allowing the world to guide me to what I discover next. There's always that thrill of not knowing what I'll find, but being excited to capture it when I do.

What was your first camera?
It was a gift I received in the 1980s, a Kodak Ektra film camera with a 22mm and 44mm dual lens.

Out of the Blue

1 I set out to capture the vibrant blues of Chefchaouen's narrowest street when, suddenly, a door creaked open. A woman appeared – just for three seconds. With no time to adjust, I instinctively clicked. The reward was a perfectly timed, fleeting glimpse into life in the Blue City.
Sony A7R II, Sony 24-70mm F2.8 GM II, 1/80sec at f/10, ISO 100

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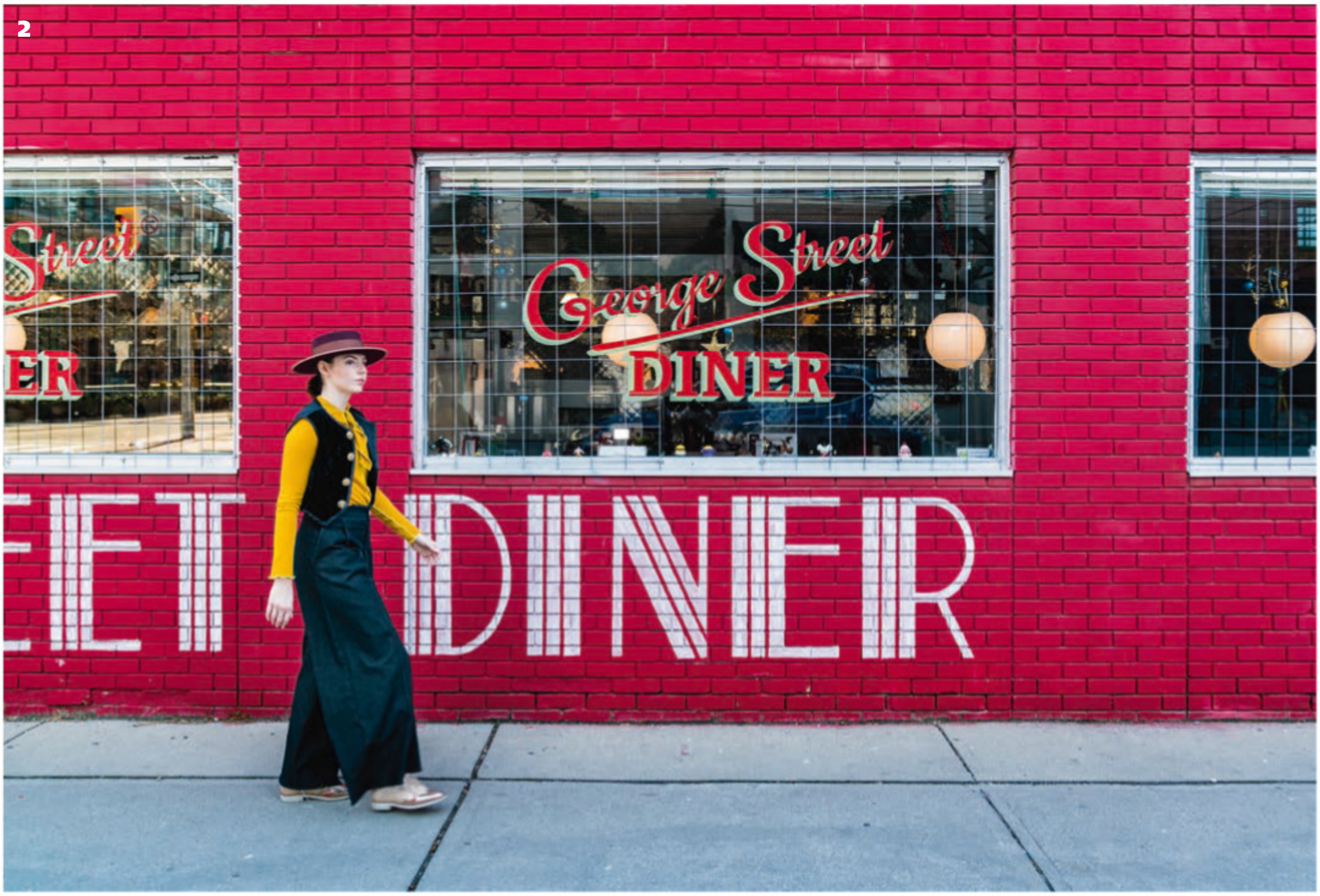

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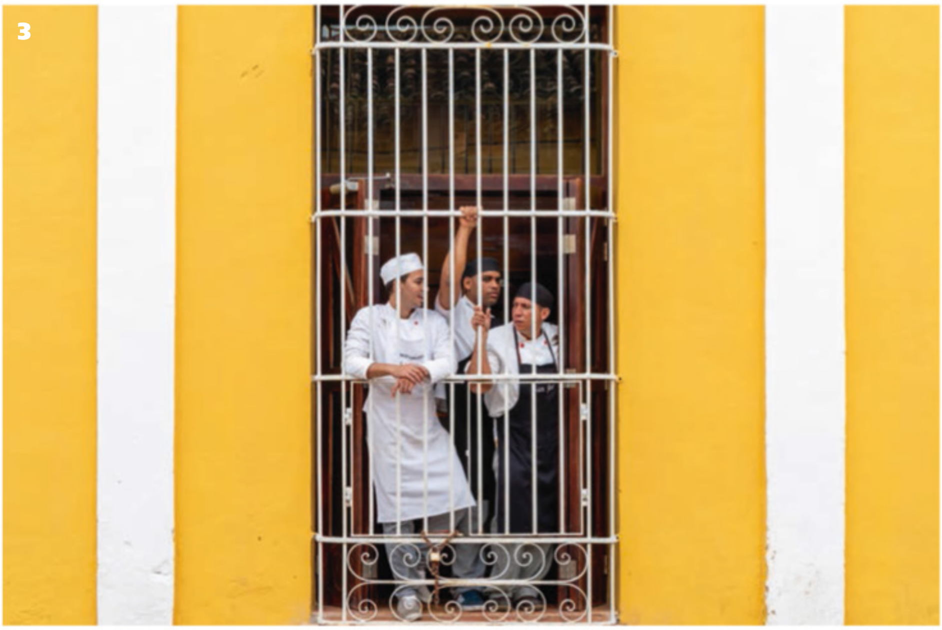


The Journey to George Street Diner

2 The George Street Diner is woman owned; the owner made the journey from Ireland to Canada with $12 and a dream, and she went from being a waitress and single mom to business owner overnight. It represents resilience, hard work, and dreams come true.

Sony A7R II, Sony 24-70mm F2.8 GM II, 1/320sec at f/2.8, ISO 100

A Slice of Trinidad Cuba

3 A spontaneous shot taken on a lively street in Trinidad, Cuba. I wanted to capture the vibrant essence of local life, but the challenge was the confined view through the bars, framing the chefs in a moment of casual connection against the bold yellow backdrop.

Sony A7R II, Sony Distagon T FE 35mm F1.4 ZA, 1/200sec at f/6.3, ISO 320

Current kit
Sony A7R V, Sony T FE 35mm F1.4 ZA, Sony 24-70mm F2.8 GM II.

Favourite lens
My Sony Distagon T FE 35mm F1.4 ZA as it delivers stunning sharpness, rich colours, and beautiful bokeh. Its fast aperture excels in low light, a classic 35mm perspective and a satisfying manual aperture ring; it's perfect for travel, street, and everyday photography.

Favourite accessory
My Peak Design Carbon Fiber Travel Tripod. It's super-light, sturdy and fits in my carry-on bag.

Dream purchase
Sony FE 600mm F4 GM OSS lens.

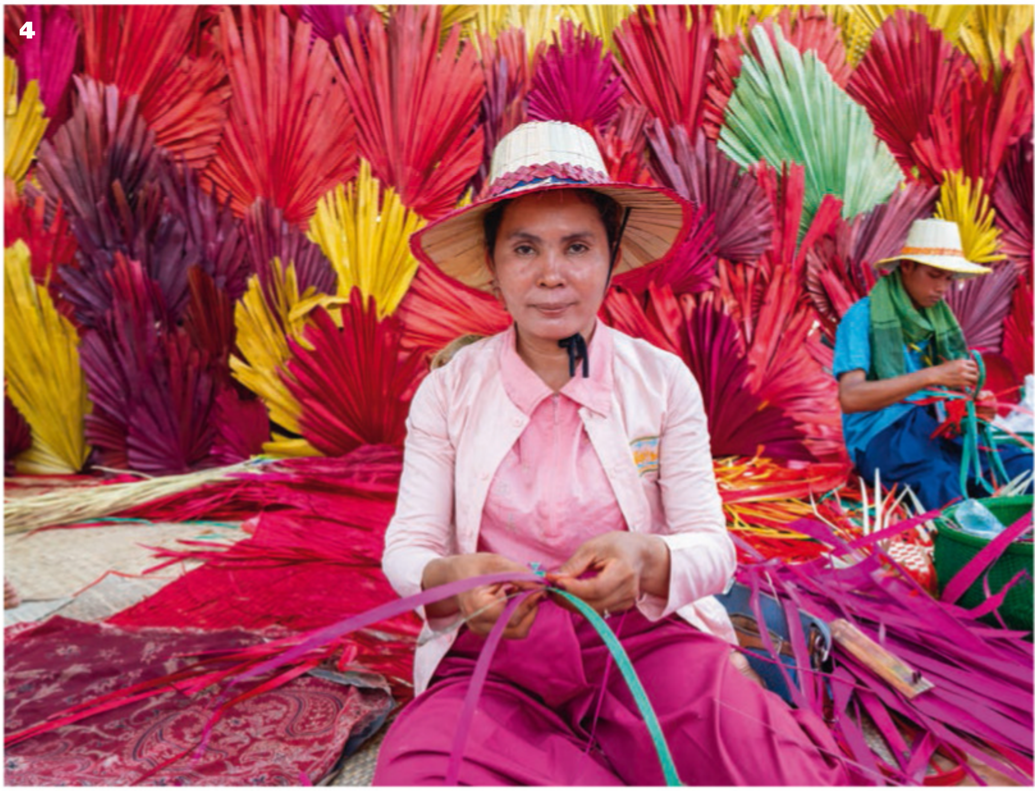
What software do you use for editing?
Mainly Lightroom for colour grading and fine-tuning, along with Photoshop for more detailed retouching when needed.

Favourite photographers
Krystle Wright, she's brilliant, fierce and bold. Jody MacDonald for her endless inspiration, and Cristina Mittermeier for doing the world proud while creating incredible images.

Favourite photography books
The Atlas of Beauty: Women of the World in 500 Portraits by Mihaela Noroc. *Magnum Contact Sheets* by Kristen Lubben.

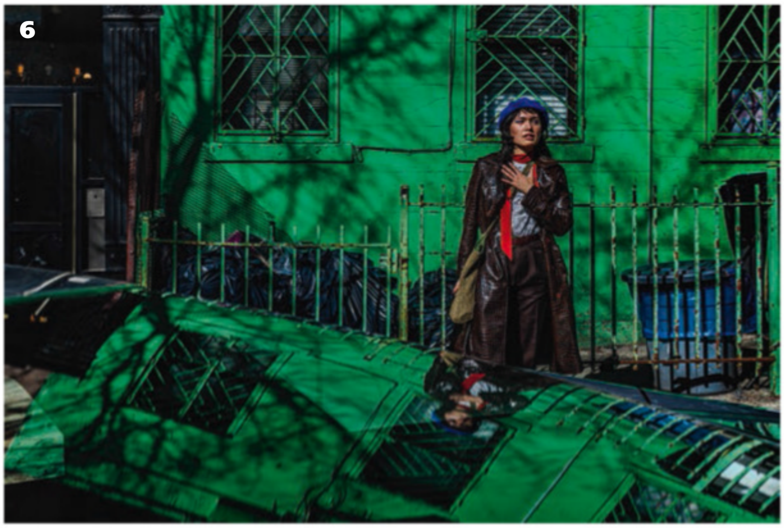
Favourite tips
Observe before you shoot. Take time to understand your subject and surroundings. Use natural light. It's the most powerful tool for creating depth and emotion. Shoot with purpose. Think beyond aesthetics – what story are you telling? Keep experimenting. Some of my best lessons came from failed shots. Engage with your subjects. If you're photographing people, build a connection first.

About your pictures
These are some of my favourite colourful spontaneous encounters from my travels. Whether it's a nonna gazing from a window, an unexpected door opening, men behind bars in Cuba, or the raw, unguarded expression of a stranger, I seek to capture fleeting moments that evoke a feeling or tell a story. These unposed, authentic snapshots are what make my photography meaningful to me.



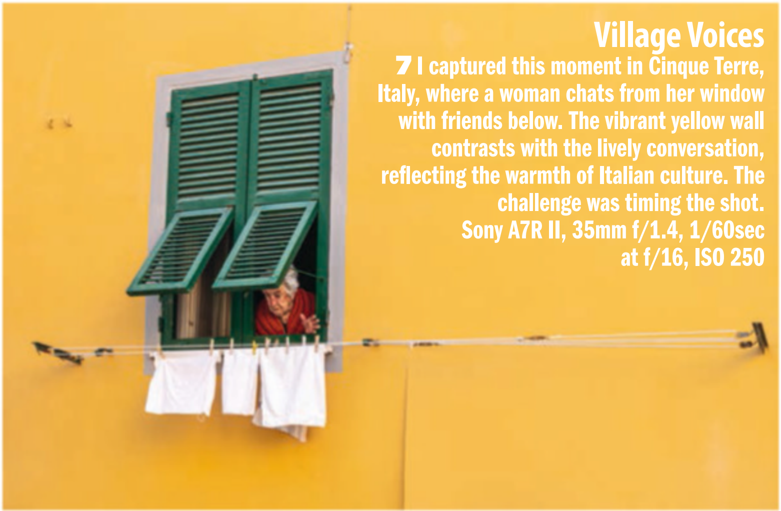
Crafting Tradition

4 In the heart of Angkor Wat, a woman weaves palm fronds for Khmer New Year. Amidst the vibrant colours and rich culture, I aimed to capture the intricate art and the spirit of celebration, battling the midday sun and crowds for the shot.
Sony A7R II, 24-70mm, 1/200 at f/4, ISO 400



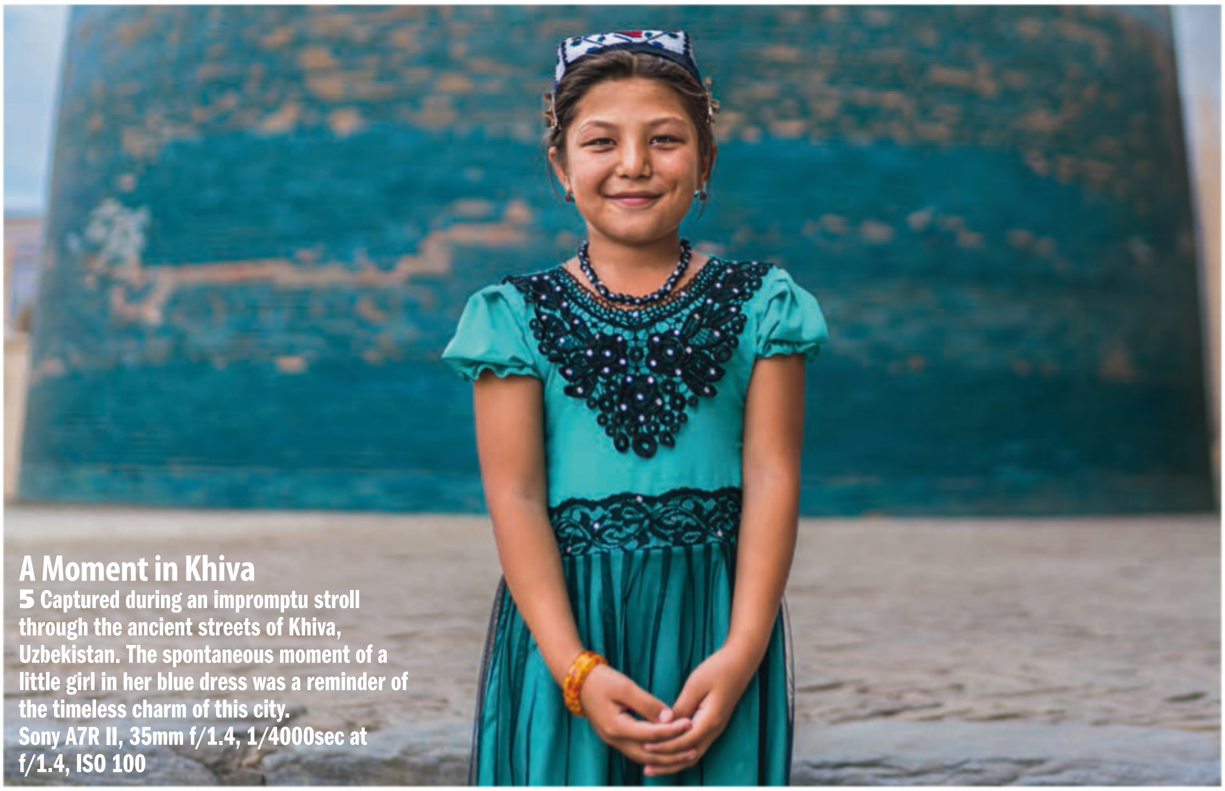
Parallel Realities

6 Captured in New York, this reflection in a car hood symbolises duality, much like my experience as a twin, which draws me to reflections in photography. The challenge was timing the shot to capture the right angle amidst the bustling city street.
Sony A7R V, 35mm, 1/500 at f/8, ISO 100



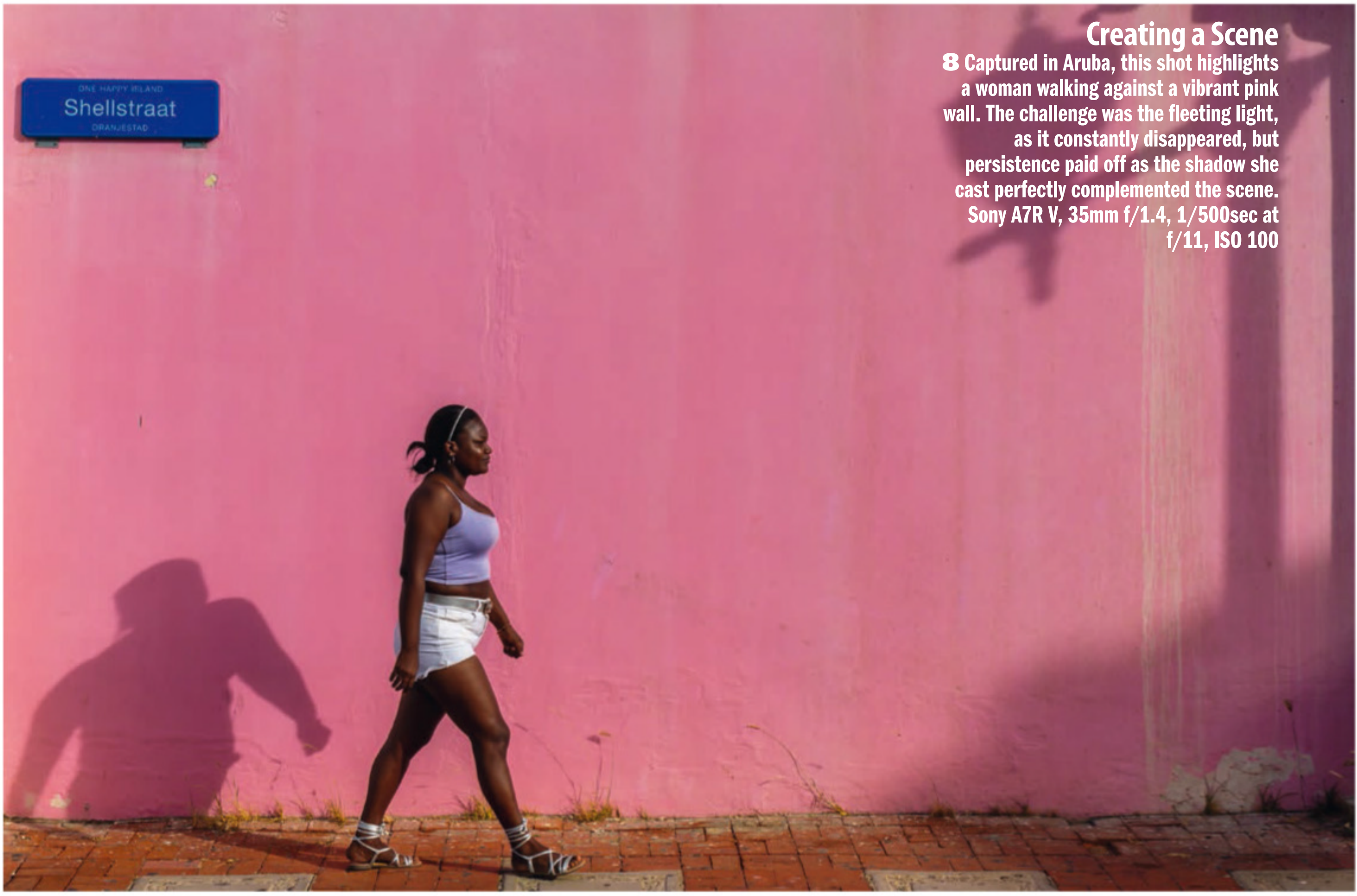
Village Voices

7 I captured this moment in Cinque Terre, Italy, where a woman chats from her window with friends below. The vibrant yellow wall contrasts with the lively conversation, reflecting the warmth of Italian culture. The challenge was timing the shot.
Sony A7R II, 35mm f/1.4, 1/60sec at f/16, ISO 250



A Moment in Khiva

5 Captured during an impromptu stroll through the ancient streets of Khiva, Uzbekistan. The spontaneous moment of a little girl in her blue dress was a reminder of the timeless charm of this city.
Sony A7R II, 35mm f/1.4, 1/4000sec at f/1.4, ISO 100

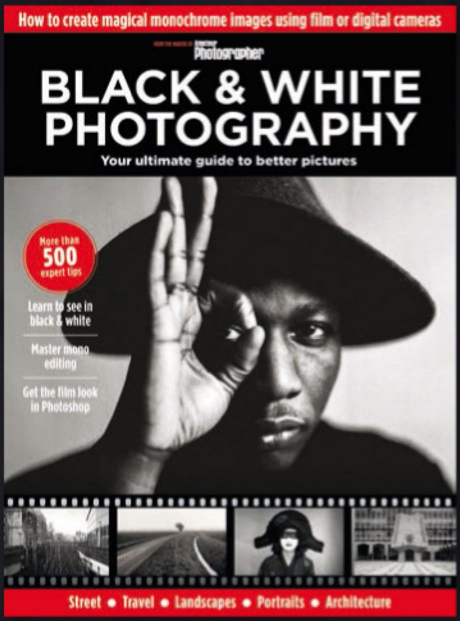


Creating a Scene

8 Captured in Aruba, this shot highlights a woman walking against a vibrant pink wall. The challenge was the fleeting light, as it constantly disappeared, but persistence paid off as the shadow she cast perfectly complemented the scene.
Sony A7R V, 35mm f/1.4, 1/500sec at f/11, ISO 100

From the makers of Amateur Photographer magazine

Your definitive guides to assist you in all aspects of photography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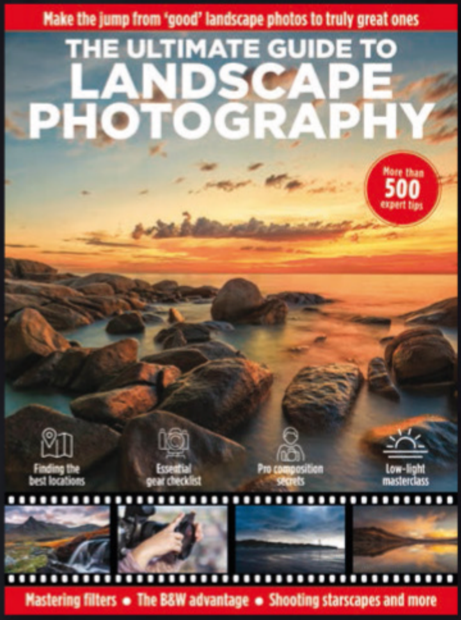
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A round-up of the AP testing team's favourite and most highly rated kit, including both cameras and all kinds of accessories, across a wide range of price points

OM System Tough TG-7

● £449 ● explore.omsystem.com

This latest model in a long line of class-leading rugged cameras is waterproof to 15m, shockproof against a 2.1m drop, crushproof and freezeproof. The 25-100mm equivalent lens is paired with a 12MP sensor, with in-body stabilisation to combat shake. Viewing is via a 3in LCD. The TG-7 is also one of the few cameras of its type that can record raw files.

★★★★☆ **Reviewed 2 Apr 2024**

Canon PowerShot G7 X Mark III

● £849 ● www.canon.co.uk

This lovely little pocket camera provides a good range of features for both photography and video. You get a 20MP 1in sensor, 24-100mm equivalent f/1.8-2.8 zoom lens, 4K 30p video recording, and a tilting rear screen. It's ideal for those who'd like more advanced controls than on a smartphone.

★★★★☆ **Reviewed 28 Sep 2019**

Fujifilm X100VI

● £1,599 ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

The sixth version of Fujifilm's charismatic rangefinder-styled compact boasts a 40MP APS-C sensor in front of its fixed 23mm f/2 lens. It also gains in-body stabilisation while barely increasing in size. Traditional analogue control dials are joined by a unique hybrid optical/electronic viewfinder and a tilting touchscreen on the back. It's a truly fabulous camera.

★★★★★

Reviewed 9 Apr 2024

Ricoh GR III

● £949 ● ricohgr.eu/en-gb

A favourite of street photographers, the GR III combines a 24MP APS-C sensor and a sharp 28mm equivalent f/2.8 lens in a slim, pocketable body. It offers sensitivities up to ISO 102,400 and 4fps shooting, while in-body image stabilisation helps keeps image sharp. Viewing is via a fixed 3in rear LCD or an optional optical viewfinder that slots onto the hot shoe.

★★★★☆

Reviewed 3 Aug 2019

Sony RX100 VII

● £1,050 ● www.sony.co.uk

Sony has somehow crammed a 24-200mm equivalent zoom, pop-up electronic viewfinder, tilting screen, 20 fps shooting and 4K video recording into a body that you can slip into a jacket pocket. With the firm's latest AF technology also on board, it's without doubt the most accomplished pocket camera on the market.

★★★★½

Reviewed 5 Oct 2019

Sony RX10 IV

● £1,500 ● www.sony.co.uk

This sets a new standard for superzoom cameras, with a 24-600mm equivalent lens, 20MP 1in sensor, and 24 fps continuous shooting. Its SLR-shaped body hosts a large electronic viewfinder and a decent set of physical controls. It's the best all-in-one camera for wildlife or travel photography that you can buy right now.

★★★★★

Reviewed 2 Dec 2017

Canon EOS 250D

● £650 with 18-55mm IS lens ● www.canon.co.uk

One of the smallest DSLRs around, the EOS 250D strikes a great balance between portability and usability. It's equipped with a novice-friendly Guided Mode, while Canon's Dual Pixel CMOS sensor provides excellent autofocus in live view. Image quality is very good, delivering vibrant colours and plenty of fine detail.

★★★★☆

Reviewed
7 Sep 2019

Olympus OM-D E-M10 Mark IV

● £749 with 14-42mm ● explore.omsystem.com

With a charismatic retro design, fine handling, highly effective in-body stabilisation and attractive JPEG output, Olympus has made a camera that's more pleasant to use than its entry-level competitors. Its 20MP sensor delivers good results up to ISO 3200 at least, and its tilting screen can be set to face forwards beneath the camera.

★★★★½

Reviewed
26 Sep
2020

Fujifilm X-T5

● £1,699 body only ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Fujifilm's latest X-T model is a great choice for serious enthusiast photographers. It boasts a 40MP APS-C sensor housed in a retro-styled body covered with traditional analogue control dials. Subject-detection autofocus, in-body stabilisation and Fujifilm's lovely colour modes round off an extremely desirable package.

★★★★★

Reviewed
3 Jan 2023

Canon EOS R50

● £899 with 15-45mm lens ● www.canon.co.uk

With the EOS R50, Canon has fitted some impressive technology into a compact and lightweight body. It boasts highly capable subject recognition autofocus coupled with rapid continuous shooting. Image quality is very pleasing too, with attractive files direct from the camera. It also works well with EF-mount DSLR lenses.

★★★★☆

Reviewed
6 Jun 2023

Fujifilm X-T30 II

● £899 with 15-45mm lens ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

This lovely little camera provides excellent performance, while preserving the charm and charisma of the X-series. It's a great all-rounder, and handles exceptionally well thanks to an intuitive interface based around traditional analogue dials. Image quality is superb in both raw and JPEG, aided by Fujifilm's peerless Film Simulation modes.

★★★★★

Reviewed
8 Feb 2022

Panasonic Lumix GH7

● £1,999 body only ● www.panasonic.com/uk

Panasonic's flagship Micro Four Thirds camera is aimed at videographers, but holds its own when capturing stills as well. Its 25MP sensor delivers plenty of detail, while enabling 5.7K recording at 60fps, or 4K at 120fps. Autofocus is much improved over the firm's older models, too. Pro-spec video functionality and effective in-body stabilisation round off a fine package.

★★★★★

Reviewed
5 Nov 2024

Fujifilm X-S20

● £1,249 body only ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Styled like a mini DSLR, the X-S20 uses electronic dials for changing exposure settings, as opposed to the X-T series' analogue controls. But you still get Fujifilm's signature fine image quality, along with in-body image stabilisation. It also boasts an array of advanced video features, making it a great choice for vloggers and photographers alike.

★★★★★

Reviewed
25 Jul 2023

Panasonic Lumix G9 II

● £1,699 body only ● www.panasonic.com/uk

Panasonic's high-end Micro Four Thirds camera provides an impressive set of features. It can shoot 25MP still images at up to 75fps, and 5.7K video at 60fps. You get an excellent control layout, incredibly effective in-body stabilisation, and very capable subject recognition autofocus. A good range of small, excellent Leica-branded lenses is available to match.

★★★★★

Reviewed
31 Oct 2023

OM System OM-1 Mark II

● £2,199 body only ● explore.omsystem.com

Updated version of this high-speed powerhouse gains some handy new features. It's capable of shooting at 120fps with focus fixed, or 50fps with AF, but now with double the buffer for extended bursts. AI subject detection recognises vehicles, animals and birds. It also boasts IP53-rated weather-sealing and includes class-leading stabilisation.

★★★★★

Review
12 Mar 2024

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Nikon Z6III

● £2,499 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

This mid-range model is one of the finest all-round cameras for enthusiast users on the market. It marries excellent autofocus and super-fast continuous shooting with solid build quality and a refined control layout. The viewfinder is particularly bright, and joined by a fully articulated touchscreen. It's at least a match for any other camera in its class.

★★★★★

Reviewed
8 Oct 2024

Sony Alpha 7 IV

● £2,399 body only ● www.sony.co.uk

Sony's latest enthusiast-focused full-frame mirrorless model sets a new standard in its class. Its 33MP full-frame sensor delivers excellent image quality, and it can shoot at up to 10fps. Its practically foolproof subject-detection AF can now recognise birds as well as humans and animals. A large, clear viewfinder and fully articulated touchscreen round off the package.

★★★★★

Reviewed
11 Dec 2021

Nikon D780

● £1,999 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

This highly accomplished 24MP full-frame model shows that there's life in the DSLR yet. It's superbly built with extensive weather sealing, handles brilliantly, and gives excellent results in any conditions. It'll provide top-level service to photographers who want to keep using their F-mount lenses and still prefer an optical viewfinder.

★★★★★

Reviewed
4 Apr 2020

Nikon Z 7II

● £2,499 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

Nikon has delivered a sensible update to its flagship high-res model, with an additional SD card slot and slightly faster shooting. As before, its 45.7MP sensor gives stunning image quality, backed up by 5-axis in-body image stabilisation and fast, accurate autofocus. The viewfinder is superb, and F-mount SLR lenses can be used via the FTZ adapter.

★★★★½

Reviewed
6 Feb 2021

Nikon Z 9

● £5,299 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

Without doubt Nikon's finest camera yet, the Z 9 combines high resolution, breathtaking speed, subject-recognition autofocus and pro-level build. It's capable of shooting 45.7MP raw files at 20fps for 1,000 frames, and 11MP JPEGs at 120fps. It can also record 8K video. With its superb viewfinder and tilting rear screen, it's probably the most capable camera around.

★★★★★

Reviewed
22 Mar 2022

Canon EOS R6 Mark II

● £1,999 body only ● www.canon.co.uk

Based around a 24MP full-frame sensor, this brilliant all-rounder will do almost anything you might ask it to. It combines reliable subject-detection AF, rapid continuous shooting, and effective image stabilisation in a body that handles well and gives great results. It also works well with adapted EF-mount DSLR lenses.

★★★★★

Reviewed
21 Mar 2023

Sony Alpha 7R V

● £3,999 body only ● www.sony.co.uk

With its 61MP full-frame sensor, the A7R V provides class-leading image quality while adding a whole array of improvements over its predecessor. These include subject-detection AF, a larger, more detailed viewfinder, and a more flexible rear LCD design. For those whose needs are more about image quality than speed, it's probably the best full-frame camera you can buy.

★★★★★

Reviewed
17 Jan 2023

Leica M11 Monochrom

● £8,300 body only ● uk.leica-camera.com

Within its own specialist niche, this monochrome-only manual-focus rangefinder is almost perfect. Its build quality is stunning, and the pared-back design allows you to immerse yourself completely in the process of taking pictures. Most importantly, the 60.1MP sensor produces fantastic results, reaching a new pinnacle in black & white image quality.

★★★★★

Reviewed
16 May 2023

Fujifilm GFX100 II

● £6,999 body only ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Fujifilm's latest super-high resolution medium-format camera places an updated 102MP sensor in a pro-spec modular body. Subject-detection autofocus is on board for animals, birds and vehicles, while in-body image stabilisation helps keep handheld shots sharp. It's the ideal camera for serious photographers who demand the ultimate in image quality.

★★★★★

Reviewed
21 Nov 2023

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Tenba DNA 9 Slim Messenger

● £110 ● uk.tenba.com

If you'd like a small shoulder bag to carry a camera and a couple of lenses, this is among the best you'll find. Measuring 28cm wide by 20cm tall, it's well suited to holding a mirrorless camera or a compact DSLR. The quality of materials and construction is excellent, and there are plenty of handy pockets for organising accessories.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 26 Apr 2022**

Vanguard Veo Select 46BR

● £120 ● www.vanguardworld.co.uk

This backpack is capable of swallowing a substantial amount of kit while retaining a travel-friendly 28cm slim profile. An array of access points allow you to get at your kit from the back, top or either side. It's capable of holding a full-frame DSLR with 4-6 lenses along with a 13in laptop.

★★★★★

Reviewed 6 Jul 2019

Wandrd Prvke 31

● £279 (photography bundle) ● eu.wandrd.com

This spacious backpack offers an excellent combination of uncluttered style, rugged construction and a selection of genuinely useful pockets. The roll-close top section is the icing on the cake that always seems to allow just one more item to be squeezed in. Crucially, it's comfortable to carry over long distances.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 11 Sep 2021**

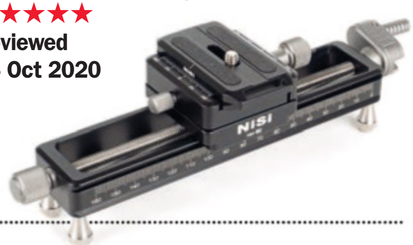
NiSi NM-180 Macro Rail

● £105 ● www.nisioptics.co.uk

Arguably the best macro focusing rail available right now, the NM-180 combines excellent quality build with super-smooth operation. It's easily capable of supporting a full-frame SLR while offering up to 130mm of travel, with a fold-out handle providing fine adjustment. It also boasts extensive compatibility with the Arca Swiss quick release system, with a dovetail profile along its base and a rotating clamp on top.

★★★★★

Reviewed 24 Oct 2020



Cullmann Rondo 460M RB8.5

● £75 ● www.transcontinenta.co.uk/cullmann

If you want a fully featured tripod kit on a budget, this is a great choice. Four-section aluminium legs provide a max height of 160cm, while packing down to 43.5cm. It's rated to support a 4kg load, weighs 1.46kg, and one leg can be combined with the centre column to form a monopod.

★★★★½

Reviewed 21 Mar 2020

MeFOTO RoadTrip PRO

● £225 ● uk.benroeu.com

Few tripods come close to matching this one for sheer versatility. It extends to 152.5cm, folds down to 38.5cm and weighs 1.37kg. One leg can be detached for use as a monopod or boom arm, and there's even a small desktop stand stowed inside the centre column. It's sturdy enough to support a full-frame mirrorless set-up.

★★★★★

Reviewed 12 April 2022

Benro Rhino 24C tripod with VX25 head

● £250 ● uk.benroeu.com

Benro has got pretty much everything right with this sturdy, well-designed tripod and head that'll support a substantial load. This four-section carbon fibre model offers a maximum height of almost 1.7m, while folding down to 49cm and weighing 1.74kg. It's easily capable of supporting a full-frame DSLR with a telephoto zoom. Quite simply, it's a fantastic kit for the money.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 28 Nov 2020**

NiSi True Color ND-Vario 1-5 stops

● £89-£189 ● www.nisioptics.co.uk

This high-quality variable neutral density filter is ideal for regulating the amount of light entering your lens, without introducing any colour cast. It's optically excellent, boasts an oil and water-repellent coating, and includes a handy and accurate density scale. It's available in sizes from 40.5mm to 95mm.

★★★★★

Reviewed 24 May 2022

Benro SupaDupa Pro MSDPL46C

● £190 ● uk.benroeu.com

It may have a ridiculous name, but this five-section carbon fibre model might just be the best monopod we've ever tested. One clip leg lock provides easy length adjustment, while the lower twist locks are waterproof. On the top there's a clever bowl head with an Arca-compatible clamp. It's a great choice for those who regularly shoot with large telephotos.

★★★★★

Reviewed 24 April 2021

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Nissin i40

● £159 ● www.kenro.co.uk

A compact flashgun that's designed for mirrorless cameras, the i40 stands out for its high specification, compact size and ease of use. Its auto-zoom head covers lenses from 24-105mm equivalent. With a powerful output that belies its size, and a built-in LED video light, it's available for most brands of camera.

★★★★★

Reviewed 3 May 2014

RØDE Wireless Go II

● £309 ● en.rode.com

RØDE's compact wireless system makes it easier than ever to get high-quality audio for video recording. This dual-channel wireless mic kit includes two transmitter units and a receiver (a single-transmitter set is also available for £200). Key features include built-in rechargeable batteries lasting up to 7 hours, onboard backup recording, and up to 200m range.

RØDE
RØDE
RØDE

★★★★★

Reviewed 15 May 2021

Hahnel ProCube2

● £80 ● www.hahnel.ie

This dual battery charger boasts a sturdy metal shell and interchangeable plates that each accept a pair of batteries. An LCD display shows progress, and a 2.4A USB output allows phones or tablets to be charged once the camera batteries are full. Versions are available for all the main camera brands.

hähnel
CUBE2

★★★★★

Reviewed 24 Feb 2018

Datacolor SpyderX Pro

● £159 ● www.datacolor.com

If you like to post-process your images, you need to be sure that your monitor is showing colours accurately. Datacolor has designed the SpyderX to calibrate your display faster than ever before, with the process taking about two minutes. For most photographers the Pro package makes most sense.

datacolor
Spyder X

★★★★★

Reviewed 6 Apr 2019

Rotolight NEO 3

● £549 (Ultimate Kit) ● www.rotolight.com

LED lighting technology has advanced in leaps and bounds over recent years. Rotolight's compact on-camera NEO 3 offers a unique feature set thanks to its full colour RGBWW LEDs, with the ability to provide either continuous light or flash in 16.7 million colours. This firm has also programmed in the characteristics of 2,500 colour filters. Power is provided by an NP-F type Li-ion battery.

★★★★½

Reviewed 5 April 2022

Hoya Ultra-Pro Circular Polariser

● £47-£179 ● www.holdan.co.uk

Hoya's premium range of circular polarisers is available in 13 sizes from 37mm to 82mm. These filters feature 16 layers of anti-reflective coatings, high transmission, and are designed to repel water and oil while being scratch and stain resistant. An ultra-thin aluminium frame prevents vignetting when used with wideangle lenses.

HOYA
ULTRA-PRO
FILTER
CIR-PL
Water, Stain & Scratch Resistant

★★★★★

Reviewed 3 Mar 2018

Kase Wolverine K9 100mm Entry-Level Kit

● £385 ● www.kasefilters.com

With this top-quality filter system, Kase has carefully rethought every component. The slimline, low-profile holder benefits from extensive light-sealing, while the 82mm polariser clips into place magnetically; it's also easy to adjust from behind the camera. All of the filters use top-quality glass, and everything fits together into a single case. The result is a top-quality set-up that's easy to use and delivers superb results.

★★★★★

Reviewed 5 Dec 2020

Intrepid Compact Enlarger

● £280 ● www.intrepidcamera.co.uk

For film photography enthusiasts wishing to make prints at home, this compact and affordable unit includes lots of handy features. Based around full-colour LED technology, it supports both mono and colour printing. It's perfect for those who don't have space for a permanent darkroom.

★★★★★

Reviewed 17 July 2021

Fujifilm Instax Link WIDE

● £140 ● www.instax.co.uk

This brilliant portable printer produces great-looking 6x10cm prints on Fujifilm's Instax Wide film. It connects to your smartphone via Bluetooth and is controlled using an attractively designed and intuitive app. Powered by a built-in rechargeable battery and available in white or grey, it'll slip easily into a bag.

★★★★★

Reviewed 25 Jan 2022

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902870	Canon EF 135mm f2 L	£399
906898	Canon EF 16-35mm f4L IS USM	£399
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906789	Canon EF 85mm f1.4L IS USM	£1099
904094	Canon EF 85mm f1.8 USM	£180
906848	Canon EF-S 10-18mm IS STM	£134
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906388	Canon EF-S 17-85mm f4-5.6 IS USM	£108
906943	Canon EF-S 55-250mm f4-5.6 IS STM	£179
906755	Canon EOS 200D & 18-55mm	£349
902675	Canon EOS 350D body	£90
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906841	Nikon 70-300mm f4.5-6.3 DX VR AF-P	£229
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906631	Sony FE 20mm f1.8	£599
906880	Sony FE 24-70mm f4 T* Zeiss	£429
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906825	Sony FE 50mm f1.4 GM	£949
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100 F2.8 USM macro box	£299
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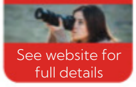

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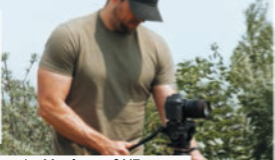

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Final Analysis

Damien Demolder considers...

Greek Harbour, 1963, by Ernst Haas. A fishing boat is tied up at the quayside and windmills line the far harbour wall which is overlooked by a castle and a lighthouse

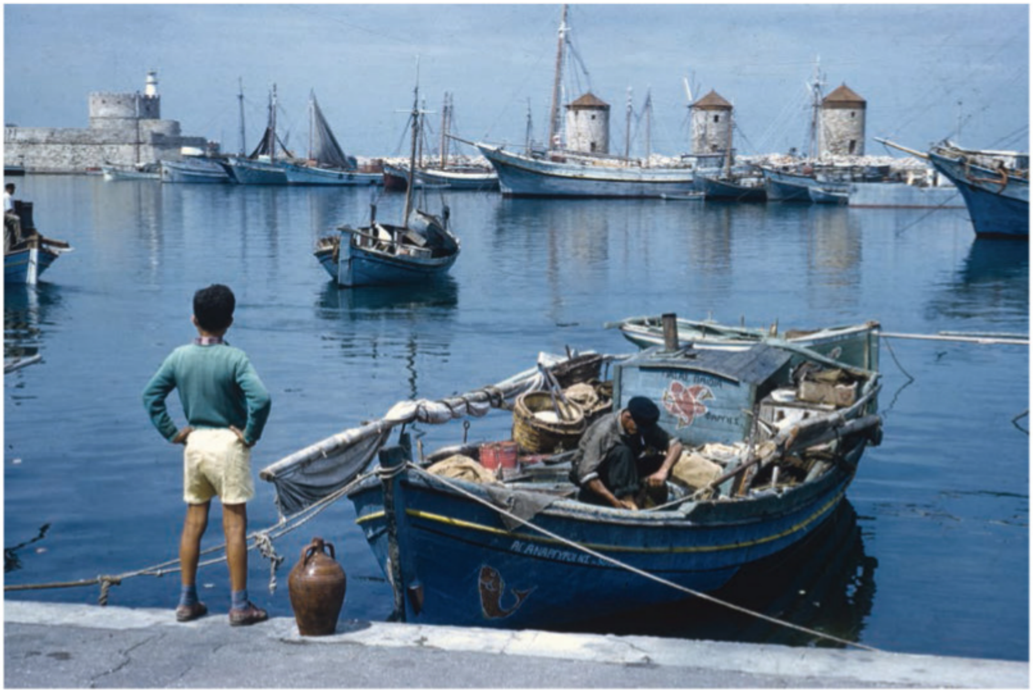

PHOTO BY ERNST HAAS © GETTY IMAGES

I wonder when the day will come on which we'll realise we've run out of unspoiled and authentic views. Globalisation, travel-for-all and the unrelenting desire of the wealthier parts of the world to inhabit the prettier parts of the world mean that a homogenised fog of tourists, and all that comes with them, is descending over every once-beautiful spot on the planet. Places aren't the same as they were, and so much of the world is being ruined. I realise I sound very old even thinking this, and that I'm as much to blame for the degeneration as anyone else who likes to nip to somewhere they don't come from. But it's still a massive shame.

Idyllic scene

The image here is simply marked Greek Harbour in the Ernst Haas archive on Getty Images, but many will know it as Mandraki Harbour in Rhodes Town. If you were lucky enough to have visited in 1963, when Haas took this picture, you will have been lucky enough to see it looking as it is shown here – and may even have been lucky enough to have met the young lad still waiting for the fishing boats to come home. It's a stunning photograph of an idyllic scene, and it represents what my head tells me a Greek fishing harbour should look like. Some may, of course, but if you stand in the same place today you mightn't see the windmills for the colossal cruiseship docked behind them, or the superyachts tied up in front of them. That's if you could see between the day-trip boats, the glass bottom boats and dive boats tethered to the spot where the lad is standing.

If you were there looking for a view like the one above, you are about 60 years too late.

Crocs and sandals

One of the many problems with advancing years is that we remember how things used to be and how places used to look, and we have to travel further and to more remote places to get the same heavenly hit. But when we finally find that far-flung, inaccessible, authentic paradise, we discover a bus load of similar trippers close behind – and the downward transformation begins.

The solution is obvious, of course – other people should stay at home. But there are so many of them it's hard to get the message across to them all, and with the growth of disposable income combined with cheap flights/cruises it's unsurprising everyone wants to trample all over the flowerbeds of the planet in their Crocs and sandals. In 1963 there were only 3,192,807,828 people on Earth to buy windmill fridge magnets from their trip to Rhodes, but since then our population has more-than doubled to some 8,231,613,070. Where that lad stood in 1963 now two and a half people occupy the same section of harbourside – or spread out to give themselves a bit of personal space.

So it's hardly surprising the place feels more crowded, and places we used to encounter no one are now plagued with the inconvenience of our fellow beings. Even in the UK lonely mountain tops that once inspired our poets are strewn with multi-coloured anoraks on a day out, and contemplative riverside meadows reverberate with music, portable barbeques and plastic bottles that won't be taken home at the end of the day.

I'm glad I don't have too much longer left. I'm just concerned Elysium won't be much better.

Photographer and journalist Damien Demolder has worked in the photographic publishing industry since 1997 and is the former editor of *Amateur Photographer*. He writes regularly about photography for a number of leading publications and has also been a judge on a number of prestigious international photo competitions. See his website at **www.damiendemolder.com**

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